

Experiences, Contributions, and Recognition: Women in the Peace Process in Havana



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SUPPORTED BY:



EXPERIENCES, CONTRIBUTIONS, AND
RECOGNITION: WOMEN IN THE PEACE
PROCESS IN HAVANA

EXPERIENCES, CONTRIBUTIONS, AND RECOGNITION:
WOMEN IN THE PEACE PROCESS IN HAVANA

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PREFACE

The Corporation for Social and Economic Research and Action (Corporación de Investigación y Acción Social y Económica, CIASE) and the *Humanas* Corporation - Regional Center for Human Rights and Gender Justice (Corporación Humanas - Centro Regional de Derechos Humanos y Justicia de Género) are both part of Colombia's vibrant and immensely diverse women's movement, which takes on challenges, moves forward, creates, and transforms. Acting through diverse networks and platforms, the women's movement strove to participate actively in the process of shaping the peace agreement between the Colombian Government and the FARC-EP. Fully aware of the opportunities that the agreement would bring in terms of guaranteeing women's rights given that it recognized both the enormous impact the armed conflict had on women and the need to respect diversity, whether ethnic, cultural, racial, or regarding sexual orientation, we made proposals for each one of the points of the negotiation agenda.

Likewise, our advocacy work influenced the relevant decision-makers and enriched their perspective with plural approaches that emerged in a variety of actions and initiatives at the national and territorial levels. We always believed that this process offered windows of opportunity to transform one of the longest and most painful conflict scenarios, acknowledge and provide reparation to the victims, and strengthen democracy. Long before the peace process began, we were already convinced that political negotiation was the most adequate way to put an end to patriarchal wars.

Nevertheless, in addition to acknowledging our advocacy and peacebuilding work, it is necessary that we, as feminists, recognize the work of other women, who, from different personal, professional, and life situations, contributed to building this collective dream for Colombia.

During the process, the women members of the different delegations - National Government, FARC-EP, international cooperation agencies, and guarantor countries - faced the challenge and the opportunity to position their knowledge, learn, influence, and transform practices and discourses regarding equality and equity for women. The experience in Havana gradually changed the approach to life of many of those women.

For many of them, it was as if a new perspective on life had opened up, as if the interaction with female victims, women belonging to organizations, human rights advocates, and peacebuilders had unveiled a hitherto unimagined yet tremendously enriching reality. The men in Havana, on the other hand, also had the opportunity to see reality with different eyes - perhaps only out of the corner of their eyes. But even if many of them might still not grasp the deep meaning of that experience, their own learnings, both past and newly achieved, contributed to the peace we are now in the process of building.

The voice of those women- their experience, learnings, contributions, concerns, and victories - is what we have sought to gather in this research project. Only by recovering that “untold story” from the women themselves would we be able to make their achievements our own and contribute to their dissemination.

With this project we recognize numerous women who had remained invisible and worked in Havana so that the rights of all them became visible. The results of the Agreement in terms of gender perspective and women ‘s rights derive from multiple synergies among female Government representatives, delegates of the FARC-EP, national and international advisors, public servants, guarantors, academics, former combatants, human rights advocates, feminists, peacebuilders, local leaders, peasant, indigenous, and Afro-Colombian women, female victims, LGBTI women, and women in logistic and assistance roles whose daily support provided suitable conditions for the debates and the joint construction of possible new futures.

We are very grateful to the women who accepted to participate in this project. The conversations were not easy given that the acknowledgment of what women have achieved is still affected by power relations and feelings of guilt arising from the risk of disregarding the other. However, we are convinced that this moment

must remain visible in history and memory due to its importance, its transformative power, and its capacity to inspire utopias.

Upon conclusion of this project, we remain firmly committed to safeguarding the efforts made during the peace process, so that we, as women, can continue to be a creative and transformative force, with freedom of thought and action and without any type of violence that might prevent us from doing so.

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Strategic Director CIASE

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INTRODUCTION

After over five decades of armed conflict, the Colombian Government and the FARC-EP formally launched a peace process in October of 2012, with a Negotiating Table in Havana, Cuba. The roadmap agreed upon for the development of the dialogues, the “General Agreement for the Termination of the Conflict and the Construction of a Stable and Lasting Peace” established a six-point negotiation agenda and acknowledged that peacebuilding entails broadening democracy and the participation of society as a whole.

However, these principles did not materialize immediately; they crystallized gradually as the process advanced due to the permanent demands of civil society. With respect to the participation of women, their inclusion as first-line negotiators in the delegations took place in 2013, almost a year after the Table was established in Havana. The inclusion of gender perspective and the specific assertion of women’s and LGBTI rights came two years later, and the participation of women’s and LGBTI¹ organizations a few months after that.

1. The Subcommittee on Gender convened three meetings with women’s and LGBTI organizations and one with national experts in sexual violence, in December of 2014, and February, March, and August of 2015. The following organizations and platforms participated in those meetings: Corporación Colombiana de Teatro, representing Mujeres Arte y Parte en la Paz de Colombia; Asociación de Mujeres de Colombia, ASODEMUC; Cumbre de Mujeres y Paz, represented by Casa de la Mujer; Iniciativa de Mujeres por la Paz, IMP; Red Nacional de Mujeres and Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres; Red Nacional de Mujeres Excombatientes de la Insurgencia; Asociación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas e Indígenas de Colombia, ANMUCIC; Mariposas de Alas Nuevas; Alianza Tejedoras de Vida, representing Alianza Departamental de Mujeres de Putumayo; Corporación Caribe Afirmativo; Departamento de Mujeres de la Coordinación Nacional de Desplazados, CND; Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca, CRIC; Asociación Campesina del Catatumbo, ASCAMCAT; Asociación de Mujeres Araucanas Trabajadoras, AMART; Colombia Diversa; Federación de Estudiantes Universitarios; Corporación Humanas Colombia; Corporación Sisma Mujer; De Justicia; Taller Abierto; Corporación Mujeres Sigue Mis Pasos; Escuela de Estudios de Género of the Universidad Nacional de Colombia; and PROFAMILIA.

In all of the country's political and decision-making scenarios, Colombian women have historically insisted on the negotiated solution to the armed conflict. For this reason, there was widespread discontent when the main negotiating team was made up of exclusively of men. The insistence of women's organizations finally led to the inclusion of representatives in the talks and the creation of the Subcommittee on Gender².

Moreover, as time passed and for different reasons, other women came to be included in the delegations of the Colombian Government, the FARC-EP, the guarantor countries, Norway and Cuba, and the international cooperation agencies, where they were responsible for various processes and fundamental activities for the development of the peace talks.

However, their presence has not been made visible enough nor have they been sufficiently acknowledged. Although the positioning the female representatives achieved at the Table and the roles they played prior or parallel to the negotiations caused their work in the peace process to be recognized, it was acknowledged to a lesser extent than that of their colleagues at the Table. Even today, when the process has concluded, numerous women who made significant thematic, conceptual, communications, and logistic contributions to the progress of the negotiations and the achievement of the final peace agreement remain anonymous.

The fundamental underlying premise of the research whose findings we are presenting in this document is that the contribution of women to the process needs to be recognized. The agreement between the parties is transcendental for Colombia and the achievements of women, particularly of the Subcommittee on Gender, are unique in the history of peace processes around the world. Moreover, the contribution of the members of the teams and delegations in the peace process must be not only recognized but also documented as an essential part of the history of the process and the country.

In this sense, Humanas Colombia Corporation and the Corporation for Social and Economic Research and Action, CIASE, launched this research project, in line with the provisions of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 of 2000 regarding the importance

2. The Subcommittee on Gender was established on 7 September 2014.

of carrying out studies on the role of women in the consolidation of peace. The objectives of the project were the following:

- First, to identify and make visible those women who participated in the peace process as members of the delegations of the National Government, the FARC-EP, the guarantor countries, and the international cooperation agencies, bearing in mind the different spaces in which they were present and the roles they played during the process.
- Second, to learn about their participation experience: the form and content of their participation, their recognition by others, the recognition among them, their experiences, and their feelings, among others.

This book is divided into seven sections. The first part introduces the starting points of the research. The second discusses the participation of women in the delegations and Negotiating Table: contents and spaces of participation, roles played, influencing and positioning strategies employed, key contributions, etc. The third section offers a reflection on individual recognition and self-recognition of women's participation, the recognition by other female participants and by their circle of close relations: work colleagues, family, and friends. The fourth section addresses the issue of care, with respect to the women who carried out that sort of activity in the context of the process in Havana, as well as to the care practices among them and toward the other members of the delegations. Section five examines the subjective dimension of the participation of women in the peace process: expectations, learnings, and meanings. The sixth section sets forth the overall conclusions of the research, and the final section provides a list of names of the women who participated in the delegations and who were the focus of our research, in order to make them visible.

The information that served as the basis for documentation and analysis was gathered by means of semi-structured interviews with women members of the delegations of the National Government and the FARC-EP, national and international advisors to the process, advisors from international cooperation agencies, and women from the guarantor countries. 16 interviews were carried out between September and December of 2016, in the cities of Bogotá (Colombia) and Havana (Cuba), as well as on Skype with those women who were in other cities.

Of the women interviewed, seven belonged to the National Government delegation, five to the FARC-EP peace delegation, one was a national advisor, and three were representatives of international cooperation agencies and guarantor countries. Their roles and activities within their respective delegations in the context of the peace process varied greatly; the group included members of the communications teams, thematic advisors, members of the Subcommittee on Gender and the Technical Subcommittee for the End of Conflict, guarantors and representatives. The purpose of the interviews was to learn more about the content and scope of their participation, the capacity in which they participated, the time periods, the difficulties, the facilitating factors, their experiences, and their learnings, among others. It is important to mention that some of the initially planned interviews could not be carried out due to the pace of events related to the peace process during the months of fieldwork for this research project, namely, the plebiscite³ and the revision of the final agreement.

Nevertheless, the 16 interviews that were carried out included women belonging to all the research project's focus groups, women who performed different sorts of activities. This was fundamental for the project as the experiences the women shared derive from a broad range of roles and spaces. Clearly, the results of the plebiscite held on 2 October 2016 were a factor that marked a difference in the reflections of the interviewed women. Those interviews carried out shortly after the plebiscite made evident the impact the results had on them.

We are very grateful to Viviana Hernández, Victoria Sandino, Pilar Rueda, Paula Gaviria, Paola Molano, Manuela Marín, Juanita Millán, Juanita Goebertus, Iris Marín, Hilde Salvesen, Esther Ruíz, Elena Ambrosi, Catalina Díaz, Carmenza Castillo, Belén Sanz, and Alexandra Nariño for sharing with us the details of their experiences while participating in the peace process in Havana. Likewise, we thank all of those women who were involved in the process as members of the different delegations and work committees. Their

3. The plebiscite is one of the participation mechanisms established in Colombia's Political Constitution. It can only be convened by the President of the Republic, backed by the signatures of the Cabinet of Ministers, in order to allow the citizens to voice their opinion regarding a specific proposal. In the case of the plebiscite held on 2 October 2016 – the second one in the country's history – the citizens were asked to state whether they supported the Final Peace Agreement between the National Government and the FARC-EP guerrilla group.

contributions, their patience, and their strength were fundamental in achieving the signature of the peace agreement between the Colombian Government and the FARC-EP. To all of them, our sincere recognition.

We also thank UN Women Colombia, the Embassy of Sweden and Fokus Colombia for their support in the development and publication of this research project. A special thank you to the International Civil Society Action Network-ICAN, for supporting the translation and publication of this english version.

I. STARTING POINTS

In this section we present an overview of the starting points of this research project, in terms of the international women, peace, and security agenda and of the conceptual reflections that guided the process of identification of the categories on which the research was based.

In the year 2000, the United Nations Security Council unanimously approved Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security. This was a landmark resolution as it provided the basis for the United Nations as a whole and the Security Council in particular to include in their agenda the needs of women in conflict and post-conflict societies, as well as their contribution to peacebuilding, peacekeeping, and international security.

Resolution 1325 is the result of the advocacy of the feminist and women's movements, both within the context of the UN and of international relations, over several decades. By taking up the legacy of over seventy years of work by pacifist feminists around the world, the feminist movement of the 1980s began to create strong precedents in different scenarios, among them, the world conferences on women.

Thus, in the Third World Conference on Women held in Nairobi in 1985, known as the "World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the UN Decade for Women", a chapter on peace was included in *The Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women*, adopted by the participating governments (United Nations, 1986). Later, in the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, adopted by 185 governments, identified the situation of women in armed conflicts as one of the areas of greatest concern and became a strategic objective for action (United Nations, 1995).

These important precedents laid the groundwork for direct advocacy before the Security Council starting in 1998. In this sense, the meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women⁴, during the “Women and Armed Conflict” caucus coordinated by the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom was fundamental. “At that point, an intense period of lobbying and diplomacy began, which included the active participation of UN organizations, especially UNIFEM” (Méndez, 2016).

Thus, Resolution 1325 is the result of the organized and influential work carried out by feminists in different parts of the world. Among the aspects dealt with in the resolution, all of them crucial for women, we would like to highlight four:

- a) The resolution emphasizes the increased participation of women at all decision-making levels, especially those related to the prevention and resolution of conflict, and recognizes the important role played by women in conflict, post-conflict, and peacebuilding.
- b) It highlights the need to mainstream a gender perspective into the negotiation and implementation of peace agreements, and draws attention, in this respect, to disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) processes, as well as to United Nations peacekeeping and other field-based operations.
- c) It also requests special measures to protect women and girls in conflict situations from gender-based violence, particularly sexual violence.
- d) The resolution calls for putting an end to impunity and prosecuting those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes, especially those related to sexual violence and other types of violence against women and girls.

These issues have been further developed and expanded in subsequent resolutions, while other directly related issues have been incorporated. To date, the Security Council has approved eight resolutions on women, peace, and security, besides Resolution 1325: Resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106

4. CSW

(2013), 2122 (2013), and 2242 (2015). Furthermore, in November 2013, the CEDAW⁵ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women adopted General Recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations⁶.

Nonetheless, almost 17 years after the approval of Resolution 1325, although the various normative developments deriving from it have been important, the same cannot be said about its implementation. The *Global Study on the Implementation of Resolution 1325*⁷, issued in October 2015, pointed out that although there have been significant advances toward implementation of diverse aspects of the Resolution, they continue “to be measured in ‘firsts’ rather than as standard practice” (Coomaraswamy, 2015). The study also observed that “obstacles and challenges still persist and prevent the full implementation of the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda” (ibid., p. 14). The situation is no different in Colombia. Follow-up studies on the Colombian State’s compliance with the Resolution have shown great limitations regarding the different components (prevention, participation, protection, and rehabilitation) (Fajardo & Vargas, 2016).

Regarding the participation of women in peace processes, the *Global Study* showed some progress, though minimal. The analysis of 31 peace processes between 1992 and 2011 showed that only 9% of the negotiators were women (Coomaraswamy, 2015, p. 45). Only 11% of the peace agreements signed between 1990 and 2000 included references to women; however, that figure increased to 27% of the agreements signed after the Resolution was adopted (p. 44). Although this represents a significant advance, it is still a low percentage.

In this context, the progress achieved regarding the participation of women in peace processes and the inclusion of direct references to their needs and interests is significant, as it has contributed to recognizing and making women visible. For this reason, the different resolutions have drawn attention to the need for studies about the impact of armed conflicts on girls and women, as well as on their

5. Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

6. This general recommendation emphasizes the implementation of the Convention (CEDAW) to the prevention of conflicts, international and non-international armed conflicts, foreign occupation situations, or other forms of occupation, and post-conflict situations.

7. Commissioned by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Lead Author: Radhika Coomaraswamy, under the supervision of UN Women’s studies secretariat.

role in peacebuilding. Both Resolutions 1325 of 2000 and 2122 of 2013 make this explicit:

Recognizes the need for timely information and analysis on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peacebuilding and the gender dimensions of peace processes... (United Nations, Security Council, 2013).

It is precisely because we share this appreciation that we carried out the research project whose findings are presented in this publication. Various organizations around the world, as well as representatives of agencies such as UN Women, have seen the Colombian peace process as a *historical example* in terms of women's participation and results achieved by them. Others have emphasized that the work of the women and the Subcommittee on Gender "deserve recognition, attention, and special praise" (Mlambo-Ngcuka, 2016), and that the visibility of the work carried out by the women will guarantee support for sustaining peace (*ibid.*).

Historically, Colombia has stood out for its low levels of women's participation in the spaces of the formal political system and decision-making scenarios. Moreover, the recognition of those women who have participated has been marginal⁸. For this reason and given the importance for the country of the agreement signed in Havana, it is even more important to highlight the participation and achievements of women in the peace process.

The scarce visibility of women in the historical accounts of the construction of democracy in Colombia, as well as the exclusion of their achievements from the country's main historical narratives, has been commented on (Wills, 2005). According to María Emma Wills: "Just as democracy without women is nothing, history without a record of women's contributions cannot be a genuinely democratic account" (*ibid.*, p. 40).

8. In the case of elected offices, during the 2000-2014 period, women made up 14% of the total members of Congress; today they represent 20%. As far as governors are concerned, only 16% of the departments elected a woman for the job in the 2015 elections. In the positions of municipal and/or district mayor, 12.2% are women, and in department assemblies, 17%. With respect to high-level decision appointed positions, in Juan Manuel Santos' two administrations, 30% and 37% of the cabinet of ministers has been made up of women. At the department level, 37% of the appointed positions are currently held by women, and in 2016, 28% of the highest positions in the Judiciary Branch were held by women (Fajardo & Vargas, 2016).

In an effort to breach this gap, our research project documents four aspects of the participation of women in the peace process in Havana: their participation in the delegations of the FARC-EP, the National Government, and international cooperation agencies, including the guarantor countries; the recognition of that participation; the care tasks and practices during the process; and the subjective experience of participation.

Some of the research on women's participation and influence in peace processes carried out at the international level has stressed the importance of analyzing women's participation beyond the quantitative aspect. It has also emphasized the need to understand the difference between the mere presence of women and their concrete influence once they are included in the Table and the negotiating and/or thematic teams has. While the number of women who participate has a great symbolic importance, so does their actual capacity to exercise influence throughout a process. This means that it is necessary to not merely count women, but rather, make visible how their participation influenced the process (Paffenholz, Potter & Buchanan, 2015).

There is also evidence that a stronger influence of women on peace processes "is positively correlated with more agreements reached and implemented" (Dixon, Paffenholz, Ross, Schuchter & True, 2016). Thus, it is also important to inquire into those aspects of their participation that make it possible to establish that correlation.

Consequently, this research project documents the *participation in Havana of women members of the delegations of the FARC-EP, the National Government, and the international cooperation agencies, including the guarantor countries*. The aspects studied sought to identify the process through which women were selected as part of the delegations, highlighting their qualities regarding professional, work, political, and organizational experience, as well as the spaces they occupied and the roles and activities they performed. The objective of that was to inquire into the different levels of integration and influence achieved by the women, as well as to highlight the fact that they participated in all sorts of activities related to the peace process in Havana.

We also identified the action and influencing strategies launched by women, their contributions and achievements, and also the obstacles they faced. Given that in most peace processes there

are limited opportunities for women to exercise influence (ibid.), it is essential to identify the strategies they used to that effect. It has also been pointed out that when studying women in peace processes, it is difficult to identify their specific thematic contributions (Paffenholz, Potter & Buchanan, 2015). In our case, asking the women participants about their main contributions and achievements was fundamental in order to counter that difficulty and ensure that those contributions did not get lost when writing the memoirs of the process.

In connection with our goal of making visible how women's participation in the peace process counted, it was crucial to address the dimension of *recognition*. The exercise of politics and power has been linked historically to the masculine, and despite women's increased participation, they are still considered to be "out of place" in many contexts and not taken into account in the same way their male peers are. Even today it could be said that "society places greater value on male leadership" (Inter-American Commission of Women, 1998, p. 59) in every scenario of *the public sphere*, particularly in political processes. Consequently, the levels of recognition of women's leadership and political roles granted by society in general, their communities, and their male colleagues are very low (Bernal, 2006).

Women contribute significantly to all phases of a peace process, that is, preparation, negotiation, and implementation. However, it has been possible to observe that their contributions, from the "highest" to the "lowest" level in the internal hierarchy of each process, are frequently invisibilized, compared to those of men (Paffenholz, Potter & Buchanan, 2015). Additionally, in such scenarios, there are also differences among professional positions, which are recognized in diverse ways, not just monetarily, but also in terms of overall social prestige.

There is thus a recognition gap: one between men and women, and the other among women, depending on their position within the processes. Those women who contribute to the development of the process in logistics, operational, and care positions are notoriously less visible than those who, albeit with difficulty, hold high-level or first-line positions.

The lack of recognition of women's leaderships and roles also translates into obstacles or restrictions to their work. Since

they are not recognized as peers within political processes, their contributions tend to be valued less; therefore, earning their place in the discussions and positioning their voices entails much greater efforts. According to Angélica Bernal's (2006) conceptualization of the obstacles women face when trying to participate in political processes, the hurdles linked to traditional views of the "feminine" are the most important ones.

Our inquiry regarding women in the peace process in Havana addressed three types of recognition: individual recognition or self-recognition; recognition by other women participants, that is, recognition among women; and recognition by the women's close circle of relations, particularly their families, friends, and colleagues.

One of the objectives of the research project whose findings are included in this publication was to make visible the participation and contributions of women, taking into account the different spaces and roles in which they were present during the process. This implied looking at women in every possible role, from full-fledged members of delegations to women who performed care-related tasks, whether remunerated or not. The contributions of those persons who carry out these tasks, mainly women, are not visible in the literature regarding the participation of women in peace processes and in the different levels of peacebuilding. Neither are the contributions of the logistics staff in the scenario of the process itself, nor those of the persons who, in many ways, facilitate the participation and performance of the tasks others have been entrusted with. This finding is both surprising and unexpected, considering that those usually invisible tasks, such as preparing meeting and housing spaces and providing food and cleaning services, among others, make possible the full operation of the process.

In fact, the elements of the good life, which includes care, are considered to be personal aspects that do not belong to the moral, social, or political spheres (Benhabib, 1990, p. 129). The feminist critique of the sexual division of labor questions the social production of differences and inequalities between men and women, pointing out that care work introduces a hierarchy, since it is not only carried out by women, but also considered to have little value and, therefore, invisibilized (Arango & Molinier, 2014, p. 118).

For that reason, our research sought to include those women who contributed to the peace process by carrying out care work,

both housekeeping tasks and looking after others; however, the information we were able to gather is limited, precisely because of the low visibility these tasks have in this type of process. As an emergent aspect of the research process, we also included documentation on the care practices that took place within the peace process itself. According to the interviews, these practices turned out to be fundamental among women participants and with respect to their colleagues in the delegations. This role, carried out in addition to their formally assigned tasks, was a source of wellbeing in view of the physical and emotional toll that such a complex process as that in Havana took on the participants.

2. THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE PEACE PROCESS: COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT, FARC-EP, AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCIES

This chapter discusses the participation of women in the peace process in Havana, taking the following five aspects into account: the method of selection of the female members of the delegations; the spaces in which they participated and the roles they performed; the individual and collective strategies they used in order to participate and exercise influence; their contributions and achievements; and the difficulties they encountered.

2.1 Selection of the women for teams and delegations

The women members of the delegations participating in the peace process performed several different roles, depending on their previous preparation and experience. Since our objective is not to merely count how many women participated in the peace process, but rather to consider aspects related to the quality of said participation, it was essential to examine the women's prior experience –academic, professional, organizational political, and social– in issues pertaining to the negotiation agenda, given its importance for the outcomes of that participation.

In the course of the interviews carried out, the women highlighted the different personal and professional traits they thought to have been determinant for their being summoned and selected to participate in the peace process in Havana. Most of the women were selected within the organizations or institutions where they worked on issues related to the peace process. In all cases, the women selected were those who could represent and articulate the interests or mandates of each organization or institution, or the Government.

Regarding selection, the interviewees who formed part of the Government's peace delegation emphasized the formality of the

process necessary to be admitted to the Havana dialogues, a process based mainly on professional and academic merit. The women selected included lawyers with experience in transitional justice issues, human rights, child protection, armed conflict, gender, conflict resolution, political science, military and security issues, protection of victims' rights and reparation, as well as experts in humanitarian law and international relations. While most of these women had been working for the State in different public institutions, others came from civil society work and human rights organizations and had never worked for the Government.

The women members of the Government delegation were picked from institutions such as the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of National Defense – including the military–, the Presidency of the Republic, the Ministry of the Interior, and the Victims' Unit. Others who were working in civil society organizations were selected to work with the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace. Taken as a whole, their background and experience in diverse sectors of the State and civil society covered a broad thematic range.

Despite their joint experience, the women members of the Government delegation pointed out that, in some contexts, they ran into persons, both men and women from their own environment, who doubted their qualifications to be included in the peace process delegations:

But of course I have also made tons of enemies, men and women, because women practice solidarity [for some things], but they are very jealous as well, so I imagine their question is: Why her? What did she do to get chosen? (Interview 1)

On the other hand, some women said that they had received a great deal of encouragement and support from their colleagues and superiors. Therefore, we have made reference to both types of reactions. In fact, some women included in this research highlighted their good professional relationship with bosses and peers, a fact that facilitated their access to Havana since their team work skills, “good chemistry” with others, and work ethics were recognized.

The women members of the FARC-EP who participated in the research project had similar experiences regarding the selection process. That is, they went through a formal process organized by the group's leaders, although the criteria were different from those

established for the Government delegation. The women belonging to the guerrilla group performed different sorts of jobs within the organization, and they were summoned on the basis of their specialization in different areas.

As in the case of the Government delegation, here too the prior experience and hierarchical positions of the women summoned were varied. Factors taken into account were seniority in the organization, the trust they had earned for themselves, their experience in specific jobs, and their activities before joining FARC-EP. For example, command of languages other than Spanish, experience working with social and political organizations in Colombia, or their knowledge of communications were key factors for their contribution to the peace process agenda.

Some of the women in this group had worked as *radistas*, as those responsible for radio communications within the insurgent organization are called; others had handled the movement's contacts with civil society and its international relations; others were involved in teaching and political education in the camps; and yet others had commanded one of the guerrilla group's blocks, carried out political or organizational work, or participated in previous exploratory dialogues and peace processes.

The FARC-EP women did not perceive any negative reactions on the part of their comrades with respect to their selection to the peace delegation in Havana; rather, they highlighted the expressions of support and pride. Nevertheless, they did not rule out the possibility that there could have been doubts regarding whether they were the most suitable for the delegation.

With respect to the women selected from international cooperation agencies and guarantor countries, most of them had previous professional and/or academic experience in issues relevant for the negotiations, as well as knowledge regarding Latin America and other peace processes around the world. Like those in the Government delegation, these women had advanced university studies and many years of professional experience. Their main role as international experts was to provide thematic technical support. Some of the women summoned to Havana from international cooperation agencies had previously focused on child protection and humanitarian action; others had political experience in cooperation; and others had done work on sexual violence, victims and reparation,

gender, youth and adolescents, international relations, peace and security, and armed conflicts.

The three groups of women who participated in the research project emphasized personal qualities – when speaking of themselves and of other women– as an important factor for their selection, a factor that, besides their experience and professional or academic preparation, contributed to the peace process. Some of the characteristics and qualities mentioned by the women were: their open-mindedness and capacity to understand the position of the “other” in the negotiations; their firm work ethics; and their ability to seek alternative solutions, ease tense or difficult situations, and generate empathy. Some of the women associated these personal characteristics with their identification as women.

Well, I don't know, I feel that there is a way of doing things that has to do with being a woman, or it could also have to do with my personal characteristics, with my way of trying to persuade others. It has to do with making people fall in love with you a bit [...]. You know what I mean? It's convincing others, with arguments of course, but arguments that also appeal to feelings. That is, generating empathies, making the other person say: “This woman is totally convinced of what she's saying and she's passionate about what she does”. Maybe this way of doing things is very feminine, that closeness, that connection between what you do and what you believe, that strong conviction ... I have seen it much more in women. (Interview 2)

As we have seen thus far, in all three cases, the women members of the delegations were selected through a formal process. In all three groups, prior experience, specialization in a topic, and/or the activity being carried out were key factors for selection. Likewise, personal characteristics were considered important, according to the women's analysis of their process of selection and delegation.

2.2 Spaces, roles, and activities

The spaces and roles in which women participated in the peace process varied depending on the *type of spaces* (those associated with the Negotiating Table and the internal spaces of each delegation; in some cases, the former were considered to be the “formal spaces” of the process) and the women's *previous positions and experiences*. The three groups of women interviewed made contributions in different thematic fields in Cuba, where the Negotiating Table was based,

but also in Colombia and Norway, given that, in some cases, the participants did not remain in Cuba all the time.

The women members of the Colombian Government and the FARC-EP delegations participated in the discussions and activities related to every point in the agenda: 1. “Comprehensive rural development policy”; 2. “Political participation”; 3. “End of conflict”; 4. “Solution to the illicit drug problem”; 5. “Conflict victims and truth”; and 6. “Implementation, verification, and endorsement”.

Nevertheless, with the exception of the Subcommittee on Gender, women were a minority in most of the Table’s formal discussion and decision-making spaces. In contrast, women were a majority in thematic advisory spaces within each delegation, as well as in activities having to do with assistance, communications, logistics, administration, drafting documents, and care – all activities that were generally invisibilized.

The female members of the Government delegation participated in several formal spaces, such as the Subcommittee on Gender, the End of Conflict Technical Table, the Drafting Committee, the Communications Committee, the meetings to discuss the proposals of the Technical Table on the Release of Minors from FARC-EP Camps⁹, and the Conversations Table, among others. The roles they performed in those spaces were those of full delegates, advisors to the delegation, committee members, special guests, and logistics and support providers, both in Cuba and Colombia. In some cases, the women participated while at the same time continuing with their jobs at the institutions where they worked.

Women were also present in all of the internal spaces established by each delegation. Some were responsible for technical input, preparing the thematic groundwork for their superiors, while others carried out research for the contents of the agreement, helped review texts, suggested ideas for future texts and negotiations, and worked in communications.

On the other hand, the FARC-EP women we interviewed highlighted their significant participation in the delegation’s internal work committees in Havana, such as the Communications Committee and

9. This Technical Table was created pursuant to the provisions of Joint Communiqué N. 70 of 15 May 2016.

the Organizations Committee (in charge of relations with national and international organizations and embassies), or in the group responsible for peace pedagogy in the different fronts, facilitating and organizing consultations with the camps in Colombia, among others. With respect to collective, formal spaces associated with the Negotiating Table, the FARC-EP women participated in activities related to joint communiqués, the Subcommittee on Gender, the meetings to discuss the proposals of the Technical Table on the Release of Minors from FARC-EP Camps, the End of Conflict Technical Table, as well as in the Table itself.

The women acted as advisors, communicators, delegation members, and rapporteurs, and participated in logistics activities within their delegation and at the Table. They also took part in the discussions regarding the different agenda points, especially in the Subcommittee on Gender, where they reviewed the texts in order to make proposals and present them for discussion with the women who represented the Colombian Government in that Subcommittee.

Participation in the Communications Committee was especially highlighted by the FARC-EP women, not only because many of them participated in it, but because communications became crucial for the organization to provide information on the peace process, voice their opinions about events taking place in Colombia, and making themselves visible as women members of the FARC-EP. Some of the activities they mentioned were the constant updating of public information on the social networks, the FARC women's blog, the FARC-EP website, which was translated into several languages, and the creation of a news bulletin.

The women we interviewed from international cooperation agencies and guarantor countries were present in all of the spaces of the Table, in conformity with their guarantor role. They also participated as experts and advisors, mainly in the Table's formal spaces and those deriving from them. For example, in the case of Point 5, "Conflict victims", specifically in the Technical Table on the Release of Minors from FARC-EP Camps and the Subcommittee on Gender, those women whose main role was that of guarantors, like the members of the Norwegian delegation, participated actively as experts and advisors.

These women emphasized the efforts made in order to position their respective mandates in the framework of the Havana agenda, for

example, issues having to do with minors or gender mainstreaming; supporting the logistics of the victims' and women's organization's delegations; or facilitating high-level international visits. In some cases, their positioning work, together with the advocacy work of social organizations, helped visibilize and keep at the center of the discussion issues such as gender perspective and women's rights.

If it had not been for the strength of civil society and of social and women's organizations that have been working on this issue for so many years, it would have been hard for us to get it included. Resolution 1325, CEDAW, and the mandates deriving from 1325 provided us with a robust basis to mobilize the international community in Colombia. [...] The UN agencies knew that it was necessary for women to be part of the process [...] I think we managed to contribute as women, helping coordinate international cooperation as a catalyst for this change.. (Interview 15)

Another key task performed by women from international cooperation agencies and guarantor countries was facilitating communications and information in the forums organized with civil society, the victims, and the Table in Cuba, in order to disseminate the proposals that these sectors made regarding the different points of the negotiation agenda.

To a greater or lesser extent, the women members of the three delegations said to have performed complementary or "extra" activities and roles that they had not been explicitly or formally entrusted with, but which required that they assign specific time to. They also mentioned that many times there were extremely long workdays. The interviewees also considered that many of the participants had had to take on "multi-tasking" or "multi-functional" roles, as they acknowledged when speaking about themselves.

There is something else I have problems with, but which is real. To put it somehow, I mean the work ethics of women. Many of the women who participated in the discussions of the technical teams were absolutely tireless; this means they could work non-stop, all day, all the time. They traveled, went to meetings, drafted documents, did all sorts of things, tons of stuff, and I think this is associated with a female work ethic. We are raised this way, to not only be good, but exceptional, just what you need in positions such as these. (Interview 13)

Most of them said that, in addition to their specific roles, the women were always up to speed regarding all logistic issues times, spaces,

transportation, food, welcoming and assisting persons invited to the Table, etc.–, supporting those who were responsible for these tasks, generally other women. This situation was not exclusive to one group; even women in higher-ranking positions within the delegations experienced it, unlike the male members.

In spaces not having to do with the negotiations –such as housing and leisure– the situation was similar: women took on different, additional tasks that men did not, in line with traditional gender roles. Some of them mentioned, for example that women were more concerned about caring for others, seeing to it that they ate well and got enough rest, and ensuring that all the logistic details were taken care of in these spaces.

The interviews also revealed that, in addition to the multiple activities carried out by women, their permanent availability and willingness to serve the peace process whenever they were needed by the parties deserves highlighting:

“Always ready, you can count on me”. “If you need low profile, I can be low profile; if you need high profile, I can do that too”. “If you need me to be there, I will be there; if you don’t need me to go, I won’t. If you need me to talk, I will; if you need me to remain silent, I will do so”. Always thinking: How can I be more useful? (Interview 2)

These types of situations were also common in the Subcommittee on Gender. Over time, some of the women who had not been formally appointed to the Subcommittee were assigned by their respective teams to participate or learn more about gender and women’s rights. Others joined due to their own interest in the issue, despite the fact that their previous focus and experience had been in other fields. In both cases, their participation was parallel to that in the other committees. This was also the case for women from international cooperation agencies who contributed to the Subcommittee on Gender in addition to their other activities, whenever they “had the time” to do so.

The interviewees pointed out that although the Subcommittee on Gender existed formally in the peace process and derived from the Negotiating Table, in practice it was not always assigned previously planned specific times and spaces. At some moments, “the Subcommittee was seen as something minor [...] as an annex, as ‘how annoying these women are’ (Interview 14). For this reason, the

Subcommittee sometimes met “whenever there was time off from the work of other committees and activities”, “at the end of the day”, and in different places:

...when there was no available space or we had to meet in the afternoon or evening, we got together at the Norwegians’ house; they always lent us their house so we could meet there. (Interview 1)

Thus, it could be said that the work of the Subcommittee was carried out to a great extent thanks to the personal “sacrifice” of the women and to their commitment:

For example, we had to hold our meetings at a time that was, let’s say, outside the conversations program. So in order to meet and move forward, we had to get up at five in the morning since we had to meet during off hours. And for the Subcommittee to work, that is, so that we could bring proposals and agree among ourselves and with the other women [...] we had to find the space, the time, make a few more sacrifices...” (Interview 5)

It was mainly the women who worked toward inclusion of the gender perspective – whether appointed by their delegations or due to personal interest–, a fact that confirms the generalized idea that gender is a “women’s issue”. This means that had it not been for them and the women’s social organizations, the final Agreement would have lacked gender perspective. The women acknowledged that without them, the peace process and the Final Agreement would have been very different, since they are convinced that without their participation, gender mainstreaming or the differential treatment of boys, girls, and adolescents would not have been included in the agenda, or at least not in the manner in which they managed to have it included.

We also inquired into the women’s access to power and decision making in the spaces and roles in which they participated in the peace process. Most of the women interviewed agreed that their access to decision-making scenarios was not significant. Although most of them acknowledged that the receptivity to their constant contributions increased throughout the process, as a result of their pertinence and technical quality, as well as of their perseverance and collective work, the final decisions were made mainly by the male heads of delegations and full-fledged representatives.

Consequently, many of the activities carried out by women depended on authorizations granted mainly by men. For example, the women members of the Government delegation, mentioned that the occasions on which they were called upon to participate and contribute did not depend on them, which was frustrating for some of them. They believe that there were many topics and specific moments in which they could have contributed, given their experience and knowledge, but were unable to do so since they were subject to authorization by others.

The situation in the FARC-EP delegation was similar. Overall, the women said that they were heard and their work recognized. However, in order to carry out their activities and in conformity with the internal structure of the FARC-EP, they needed authorization by the organization's Secretariat.

2.3 Strategies used

Women's participation, visibility, and positioning in the peace process developed gradually. Depending on the nature of their roles, the development of their activities posed significant challenges, especially regarding their positioning within the delegations and work committees and the inclusion of gender perspective. In order to face and overcome these challenges and on the basis of their technical capacities, the women resorted to different action and influencing strategies, which they identified during the interviews, although they had not been acknowledged as such during the process.

Some of the individual strategies identified were abilities and characteristics that the women described as "feminine": their conviction, their willingness to seek alternatives and solutions, their creativity and resourcefulness, and their kindness. By resorting to a sensibility that has been historically associated with women and their knowledge of issues concerning youth, boys, and girls, women's rights, and sexual violence, they took on a predominant role in their discussion and managed to give them their proper place in the negotiations, amidst the lack of knowledge and even reluctance on the part of some of the negotiators:

What I think is that, for better or for worse, the issue of childhood continues to be associated with women, and it is true that we were the ones to introduce the topic [in the peace process] [...] and most of the people working on the issue at the technical level were women. (Interview 4)

Several women also mentioned the importance of having worked from a personal and human perspective, or as some of them put it, of working “on the basis of feelings”, strengthening social relations and creating significant bonds among people. In the peace process, this manner of assuming work facilitated day to day processes, the identification of allies or possible synergies, and the increasing commitment to issues that had not been initially important for the parties at the Table. However, this did not happen immediately or in all cases; rather, it was the result of daily coexistence.

In this sense, some of the spaces that fostered this type of work were lunches, dinners, and cocktail parties attended by members of the delegations, including those of the international cooperation agencies and guarantor countries. Since these were more informal spaces, hierarchies were less important than in Negotiation Table settings, a fact that facilitated dialogue and exchange of opinions. The women also used these spaces strategically in order to position issues, try to unblock standstills, and reduce tensions. The informal nature of those events favored the rapprochement of members of the different teams and made it possible to address topics of interest in ways that were different from those used at the Table itself.

With respect to collective strategies used mainly in their work in the Subcommittee on Gender, the women agreed that working together in a coordinated manner had been the best way to get the Subcommittee created, maintain it, and achieve the explicit inclusion of the gender perspective in the discussion points of the agenda: “... the women representing the two parts developed a joint strategy” (Interview 7). Though they not always agreed on the contents and actions to be proposed and there were tensions among the members of the Subcommittee, the women’s shared interest in pushing their work forward allowed them to stay together until the end of the peace process.

The gender issue was shared by the two delegations. The women agreed on the need to combat gender inequality [...] so in this sense the two delegations understood each other better. (Interview 10)

All of the women mentioned that a key strategic factor was advocacy at the international level: establishing relations and alliances with key actors considered to be influential in the issues they wished to position. For example, among the many relationships established by

the women, they mentioned those with Leila Zerrougui¹⁰ and Zainab Bangura¹¹, Special Representatives of the UN Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict and the UN Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, respectively.

Another strategy based on coordinated work was creating awareness and understanding regarding the proposals and specific aspects previously agreed upon by the women. This was done independently but simultaneously within each one of the delegations, thus increasing the possibilities of achieving the Table's consent regarding those issues:

The way we did it was convincing the members of our own delegations at the same time. That is, while we convinced our group, they convinced theirs of things like “organizing a specific event”, “opening up such and such a space”, “calling this woman”; that’s the way it went. (Interview 5)

The women members of the Subcommittee that we interviewed pointed out the strategic importance of generating awareness of gender issues and women’s rights within their delegations. They did this on a daily basis in their internal work spaces, sometimes with the support of experts on gender that provided accompaniment at certain moments and even organized workshops on specific topics. For example, the Swedish Embassy held a training workshop on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 for Office of the High Commissioner for Peace staff, in order to increase their awareness of and commitment to the inclusion of Resolution provisions in the peace process agenda.

The women stated that the inclusion of the gender perspective was complicated at times, not necessarily due to disagreement or opposition by their delegation peers, but rather because they lacked enough knowledge in that respect: “It wasn’t that they wanted to ignore these issues; they just didn’t know about them”. (Interview 13)

The last strategic aspect highlighted by the women was their work with women’s organizations, not only because of their experience and track record in the promotion and defense of women’s human rights, but because their advocacy made the very existence of the

10. Leila Zerrougui visited the Negotiation Table in Havana in May 2016.

11. Zainab Bangura visited the Negotiation Table in Havana in May 2015.

Subcommittee possible. Moreover, they supported the latter's work by sending proposals both to the Subcommittee and the Table, and through their participation in various joint meetings held in Havana. Likewise, the efforts made by those organizations in Colombia to visibilize the importance of including women's needs in the negotiation agenda contributed to the work the women were carrying out in the context of the conversations in Havana.

2.4 Contributions, results, and achievements

It is difficult to produce a detailed account of all the contributions, results, and victories of the women belonging to the National Government, FARC-EP, international cooperation agencies, and guarantor countries delegations, since their impact permeates every aspect of the peace process. Many of them are specifically reflected in the Final Agreement, while others are evident at the level of individual and collective transformations, as well as in the very fact of achieving the Agreement.

According to the interviewees, the specific contributions of women to the peace process—within the framework of the eight thematic lines regarding gender perspective in the Agreement¹²— are all reflected in the Final Agreement.

With respect to comprehensive rural reform, the women highlighted that their main interest was the empowerment and improved access of rural women to land, loans, and technical assistance, as well as the formalization of property titles. With this, they sought to ensure that women could benefit from the provisions of the Agreement in equal conditions: Land Fund, Massive Property Formalization Plan, and Social Development programs. Likewise, they considered it essential to have achieved recognition of the need for rural women's organizations to participate in all the different levels provided for by this point of the Agreement.

12. The eight thematic lines defined by the Subcommittee on Gender for the inclusion of the gender perspective in the Agreement were the following: (1) Access to and formalization of rural property in equal conditions to men. (2) Guarantee of the Economic, Social, Cultural, and Environmental Rights (ESCER) of women and persons with diverse sexual orientation or gender identity in rural sectors. (3) Promotion of the participation of women in representation, decision-making, and conflict resolution spaces. (4) Prevention and protection measures to counter the specific risks women face. (5) Access to truth, justice, and reparation, and guarantee of non-repetition. (6) Public recognition, elimination of stigmatization, and dissemination of the work carried out by women as political subjects. (7) Institutional policies aimed at strengthening women's organizations and the LGBTI movement. (8) Separate information systems. These lines were announced on 24 July 2016.

As far as political participation is concerned, the interviewees were proud of having achieved recognition of the fact that women have faced countless obstacles to their participation and that the discrimination that keeps them from being able to exercise power and participate in decision making continues. Other fundamental accomplishments were fostering the political participation of women, the special measures to protect human rights defenders and female leaders, and the massive issuance of citizenship cards.

In the end of conflict point, specifically with respect to the bilateral and definitive ceasefire and cessation of hostilities, the women's contribution was to have gender-based violence and the denunciation of acts of sexual violence included. With respect to the negotiations on conflict victims, the women recognized as a key achievement the fact that victims' rights were placed at the center, as well as the emphasis on the importance of the issue of sexual violence, reflected in the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, the fact that sex crimes did not qualify for amnesty or pardon, and the inclusion of the gender perspective in the Commission for Clarification of Truth, Coexistence, and Non-Repetition. In relation to this point in particular, the women acknowledged the significant contributions of women's organizations.

In addition to the specific achievements embodied in the different points of the Final Agreement, the interviewees highlighted what they thought to be the achievements of the Subcommittee on Gender which go beyond the Agreement, some of which were fundamental for the successful completion of the Subcommittee's work:

- First of all, the fact that the Subcommittee convened specific meetings with civil society members in order to strengthen their work on certain points of the agenda. This was an achievement given that, at the time the Subcommittee was created, the only civil society participation that had been foreseen was the presence of five delegations of victims, and they managed to get three more meetings convened with women's and LGBTI¹³ organizations, one with national experts on sexual violence and representatives of various women's or mixed organizations¹⁴, and one with female ex-combatants from insurgent groups in different countries¹⁵.

13. Held on 15 December 2014, 11 February 2015 and 7 March 2015.

14. Held on 24 and 25 August 2015.

15. Held on 18 May 2016.

- Secondly, the organization of a high-level event to present the outcomes of the work of the Subcommittee on Gender¹⁶. The women interviewed believe that the public presentation of the Subcommittee's work in an event attended by representatives of UN Women (Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, at the international level; Luiza Carvalho, at the regional level; and Belén Sanz, at the national level); the Colombian Ambassador to the United Nations, María Emma Mejía; representatives of Colombian women's organizations; and representatives of the guarantor countries, Norway and Cuba, among others, was very important because it showed the international support and that of women's organizations to the inclusion of the gender perspective in the agreements. The events served to prove that the work carried out had not been secondary, but just as important as the other aspects worked on throughout the peace process.
- A third fundamental achievement of the Subcommittee on Gender was its positioning as an international referent in the context of peace processes and resolution of conflicts, not only because of its historical significance in the context of a peace process, but also due to the inclusion of the gender perspective in the Final Agreement. Both the interviewed women and the women's organizations consider this a positive example of women's participation and gender mainstreaming that can encourage similar experiences in future peace processes.
- Fourthly, the interviewees thought that the increasing support they garnered within the National Government and FARC-EP delegations was an important result of the constant work of the Subcommittee - although they did not all agree on the extent of that support. Nevertheless, this led to the recognition by their male peers in many public settings of the work they had carried out in the Subcommittee and of their participation in the peacebuilding process. Additionally, the women believe that their work accomplished transformations in both delegations, in terms of the internal positioning of women's issues. In particular, the women of the FARC-EP delegation consider that, after the reflection exercise fostered by the Subcommittee, the organization made the "irreversible" decision to include women's rights and gender equality in their commitments and struggles.

16. Held on 24 July 2016.

- Finally, it is necessary to include in this list of achievements, the fact that the work carried out by the Subcommittee on Gender and the influence of women's organizations laid the foundations for the women to demand participation in the implementation of the Final Agreement. The women are convinced of the need to continue exercising influence so that their achievements are not lost along the path of implementation.

2.5 Obstacles to women's participation

As mentioned above, the peace process was difficult from beginning to end and at every level, posing challenges that required individual and collective efforts to take it to a successful outcome. In this context, the women interviewed during the course of our research identified those aspects that made their work in Havana particularly difficult, as well as the events and circumstances that helped overcome them:

1. The women described the spaces deriving from the Negotiating Table as very masculine, not only because they were made up mainly of men, but also due to the logic according to which the conversations took place. These were extremely tense and confrontational, with minimal personal interaction and great distance, scarce listening capacity, and even competition, in terms of who had managed to set forth the "winning" argument. According to the women, this was more noticeable at the beginning of the peace process and every time discussion of a new point of the agenda began.

Given this situation, it was more complicated for the women to position their voices and start gaining recognition of their work and of the pertinence of their interventions. None of the women said they had been directly sidelined or their opinions undervalued, but they did perceive that many times, "the men only listened to one another".

It was a very masculine space and the issues being dealt with were very important, very difficult, so there was a lot of confrontation, with a lot of respect though; it was always a very respectful [space]. But the conversations were very difficult, and very difficult for me at the beginning. (Interview 1)

There were moments, for example, when topics discussed in the framework of the end of conflict point tended to be tacitly regarded as "men's issues", for which reason the women participated less. Despite the women's knowledge and conviction that they could

make valuable contributions, it took time for them to feel sure of themselves and participate in the discussions as intensely as the men did.

Something similar happened during the discussions pertaining to the justice and victims points of the agenda. In both the FARC-EP and the Government delegations, only men were appointed to the Justice Subcommittee/work group. Nevertheless, there were several women advisors on those issues. According to the women, the issues of justice were considered at times to be men's issues because they were part of the "tough" topics and the expectation was that contributions should come from the male members. This represented an important challenge for the women because –in addition to doing their work– they felt they had to be reminding several of the men that they had the "credentials and merits" to be part of the group.

For me, the arrival of external lawyers was a very tough process. Here I am going to make an important gender-based reflection: the moment when I felt the most feminist and carried out the most feminist reflections during the process was when I realized that although I had all the tools and instruments to engage in a legal discussion with lawyers [...the lawyer] was not willing to have that conversation with a woman; it just wasn't the type of conversation he could have; he felt totally threatened and upset [...] at the fact that they had sent a "gal" to have a discussion with him. He needed to have that discussion with former justices, with men, in order to feel comfortable during that conversation. (Interview 12)

Most of the interviewees said that at the beginning of their participation in Havana, their interventions in the formal and mixed spaces of the Negotiating Table were few and that they sought other ways to contribute to them. Nevertheless, they recognized that they all changed in that respect when they started setting aside "the fear" they sometimes felt during their interventions and began to position their voice. With great effort, they earned the recognition of their experience, their work, and their knowledge in the different spaces of the process; the Subcommittee on Gender and the Final Agreement are proof of this.

2. A second aspect highlighted in the interviews was the invisibility of women's leadership roles, which caused their work not to be recognized at times. This situation was particularly common in spaces outside the Negotiating Table, in which they had to develop

the activities assigned to them by their delegations. This turned out to be complicated, as they feel that things would have been different if a man had that role, and also because sometimes the men who accompanied them were forced to explain what the women's role was so that it would be understood.

I think it's never been easy for us women [...] and that is a generalized situation because it derives from the structure of society. For example, we would arrive at a certain place, and, as part of my communications tasks, I was responsible for the cameramen, but it always happened that people would address any man in the group: "Listen, I need such and such". And then the men had to say: "No, she is the one in charge of that". It happened every time. So it's frustrating for us, but it is a reality we must face. (Interview 5)

Facing that reality meant "summoning up strength and patience", and, above all, persevering in the development of their assigned role and supporting one another.

The women underlined the increasingly central role the Subcommittee on Gender took in national and international spaces, thus contributing to the visibility of women and their positioning, both within and outside their delegations and the Table. In some cases, international pressure and that of the press facilitated their participation in certain meetings or settings they had not been initially invited to. During the interviews, the women recalled episodes in which, upon their arrival in Havana, the press or the international delegations requested their presence in meetings or the opportunity to interview them. This situation in which "everyone wanted to talk to them" contrasted with that at the beginning of the process, when, the women said, the media did not ask for them and the different foreign –and even national– delegations involved in the peace process did not demand their presence.

In this sense, the women considered that the role played by men and women from the guarantor countries was very positive, as was the support received from UN Women Colombia. They both backed the concrete inclusion of the gender perspective, for example by sending a delegation of experts from Cuba and Norway. Moreover, given their role and the respect that the parties had for them, they always encouraged the participation of women in all of the settings associated with the Table.

3. In particular, the participation of the women members of the Government delegation was often hindered by their double work responsibility. As mentioned above, many of them held different Government positions, and from there, they provided support in specific issues or at different moments of the process. However, this did not mean they could stop attending to the specific duties of their position, and sometimes they felt they had two jobs. Thanks to the support they received from their work colleagues and family circles, the women felt confident that everything would go well during their absences and managed to comply fully with both responsibilities.

It was like having two jobs, you know what I mean? But –as I told you– and as I said to the President: “I’m doing my job” [...] I am a civil servant in this administration that is pushing forward the peace process, and if that is what needs to be done, then I will do it. And that’s the way my close circle of relations felt [...]; I mean close family circle and close professional circle. The whole team said something like: “Listen, we support you, and if you have to go away for a month because you have to be in Havana, then we’ll cover for you and face whatever challenges arise, and we’ll also do whatever two things need to be done”. So I had great support from everyone around me; it would have been impossible without that support. (Interview 2)

The situations described above were lived differently by each one of the interviewees, depending on the roles assigned to them and on their own reading of their personal characteristics. Nonetheless, the way these situations were experienced was not always understood in terms of obstacles to their own participation as women. In some cases, they began to be identified as such due to the collective and individual reflections on gender that arose in the Subcommittee on Gender. Thus, although many of the women did not describe those difficulties as obstacles to their participation, they can be considered as such.

Conclusions

As we have seen in this chapter, the women members of the National Government, FARC-EP, guarantor countries, and international cooperation agencies delegations participated in many ways in all of the spaces of the peace process in Havana. Women’s participation increased gradually throughout the four years of the process, and although they were a majority in certain spaces and at specific moments, the main leadership and decision-making roles were mostly exercised by men.

The women acknowledged that they had to constantly engage in activities other than those pertaining to the roles they had formally been assigned to, which made their work in Havana exhausting and required countless physical and emotional efforts. They placed special emphasis on the additional logistic and care-related activities they had to carry out, which despite being invisible were vital for everyday life and the development of the overall process. In this sense, they spoke of women in the process as “multi-functional” and highlighted their permanent willingness to collaborate and satisfy needs as they arose. They also wondered whether their constant and seemingly “inexhaustible” willingness to attend to care activities was related to characteristics traditionally associated with the feminine.

The contributions and achievements of the women from the three delegations can be appreciated in every aspect of the peace process and are proof of their intellectual and political abilities, as well as of their perseverance. The Final Peace Agreement reflects all of the achievements related to the inclusion of the gender perspective in every one of the six points of the negotiation agenda, thanks to the work of the Subcommittee on Gender.

Nevertheless, their achievements also encompass less tangible but equally important aspects that were instrumental in reaching their objectives: holding specific meetings with women’s and sexual diversity organizations in order to discuss the situation of women and members of the LGBTI community in the context of the armed conflict; meeting with experts on sexual violence and with female former combatants from other insurgent movements; obtaining the support of the international community, which was determinant at certain moments of the negotiation; presenting their work and the Final Agreement as international examples of women’s participation and inclusion of their needs in peace processes, which can encourage similar experiences in other processes; and earning the increasing support of their delegation colleagues. In the case of the FARC-EP, the support obtained is reflected today in the inclusion of gender equality and protection of women’s rights in their political program.

The achievement of these goals involved developing action and influencing strategies that allowed the women to strengthen their participation, even if they did not identify them as such at that moment. These collective and individual strategies included working from a personal and human perspective; using the informal spaces deriving from the peace process to position topics of their

interest; working together as women in a coordinated manner that went beyond their differences and those between their respective delegations; establishing relations with the country's feminist and women's organizations in order to strengthen their influencing capacity; and their deliberate "appropriation" of issues related to women, boys, girls, and adolescents.

With respect to the latter, it is interesting to point out an apparent contradiction that reveals the deeply rooted patriarchal culture in Colombian society. In order to position the gender perspective aimed at eliminating discrimination against women and demanding transformations of traditional gender roles, the women had to resort precisely to those roles. Given that the defense of gender equality and children are issues generally associated with women, it turned out to be less confrontational to have women demand their enforceability in the context of the peace process.

The peace process was complex and challenging from beginning to end. For the women, it was also a process that posed particular difficulties regarding their participation, as is the case in many other political settings and processes in Colombia. The women highlighted four main difficulties: the fact that they were immersed in "highly" masculine settings, both with respect to group composition and to the logic guiding the work in those spaces; the implicit assumption that the "tough" topics of the peace process were "men's" issues; the lack of recognition of women's leadership in certain activities; and their double workload, in those cases in which women started participating in the peace process in Havana while still continuing with their work responsibilities in Colombia.

The women resolved all of these difficulties, in different manners, along the way, and the support they received from the international cooperation agencies and the women from the guarantor countries was crucial for their positioning and their work in the Subcommittee on gender.

The work of this Subcommittee encountered specific obstacles that required additional efforts by the women, which they described as "sacrifices" they made due to their commitment to the topic. For example, they mentioned the fact that although the Subcommittee was a formal space established by the Negotiating Table, it often had to function outside the latter's schedule, that is, before or after the conversation sessions and in non-official spaces, since its meetings

were not always assigned a specific space in the peace process agenda. Thus, the inclusion of the gender perspective was achieved due to the women's persistence and continued efforts.

The majority of the women interviewed acknowledged that the peace process and the Final Agreement would have been different without their participation. Had they not been there, the Negotiating Table probably would not have held discussions on gender equality, the importance of women's voices in peacebuilding, and the differential treatment for minors.

On the basis of prior peace processes at the national and international levels, as well as of the perspective of those who defend women's rights and seek to transform the exclusions they have suffered historically, it could be said that the women's presence (which achieved the above-mentioned objectives through their great efforts) made a difference in the peace process and its outcomes. It also made it a better peace process, because a peace process that excludes women and their needs cannot really be considered a good agreement.

3. RECOGNITION OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

This chapter addresses the recognition of women's participation in the peace process between the Colombian Government and the FARC-EP guerrilla organization. As mentioned above in the section dealing with starting points for our research project, recognition, as understood here, focuses on the assessment carried out by the interviewees of their own participation and contributions to the peace process, on their recognition of other women who also participated, on the recognition they received from their families and work colleagues, and on the women's perceptions of how the delegates and the public at large identify and value their participation in the peace process in Havana.

In line with the historical meaning of the Final Peace Agreement reached in Havana, the recognition of women's participation is profoundly significant because it acknowledged women as political subjects interacting with other social, organizational, and government actors, incorporated the women's vision of dialogue, negotiation, and peacebuilding, and gave the process a sense of equality, participation, and inclusion. Likewise, their participation made possible democratic political action and the meaningful engagement of women in major circumstantial and political processes that Colombia's civil and political society are undergoing.

We highlight the participation of the women members of the delegations of the National Government, the FARC-EP, and international cooperation agencies, as well as that of those who, from other positions, contributed to the successful development of this process, women that the interviewees have assessed and recognized positively.

3.1 Individual assessments of the Subcommittee on Gender and the participation of women's organizations

The interviewees' recognition of their own participation and contributions to the peace process and of the participation of other women is divided into three parts: their perception of their participation and that of other women and the importance they give to their contributions to the peace process; their assessment of the Subcommittee on Gender and its achievements; and, finally, their recognition of other women who were not part of the delegations but contributed to the peace process in other ways.

The women's recognition of their own work and that of other women participants

The interviewees' individual recognition of their participation in the peace process includes the appreciation each one had of the reasons why the decision to summon them to the Negotiating Table and related spaces was justified.

In this respect, the interviewed women recognized that their prior experience, their preparation, and their achievements before the negotiations were the main reasons why they were selected for their roles in the peace process. They also acknowledged that their personal and professional characteristics contributed to the development of the negotiations and to the generation of spaces of trust at the different levels of the negotiation, especially in the Subcommittee on Gender. Thus, each one of the women valued the personal and professional characteristics that allowed them to accomplish their work in the peace process successfully yet modestly.

All of the interviewees –some, explicitly; others, with certain shyness– placed great value on the importance of their participation throughout the process, as well as on the efforts they made to contribute, on the basis of their political positions and knowledge of peacebuilding, in the different spaces of the Negotiating Table in which they were present. For example:

Yes, because when [the members of the other delegation] came up with counterproposals, I never provided advice based on extreme or radical positions [...]. They would ask me to suggest alternative solutions, and I always did. [...] helped build bridges in order to achieve the best possible solution for those points in which I was able to participate. [...]. And what I did for the

other points was to provide input [...]. I also think my role was useful because of my open-mindedness. (Interview 2)

I contributed; I was considered a serious, solid lawyer. I participated, I worked [...]. Modesty aside, I believe that point five is very solid regarding gender perspective because we went to the trouble of gathering all the literature written on gender issues in the context of reparation. (Interview 14)

The women emphasized their work within the Subcommittee on Gender, highlighting the importance of their participation in this space for the Colombian peace process and other peace processes around the world. Their recognition extends to the space of the Subcommittee itself and to their contributions there. In the following testimony, the interviewee assesses the importance of her own participation and that of the other members of the Subcommittee, the responsibility they had, and their achievements.

We never imagined it [the Subcommittee on Gender] would have such importance, neither we nor the others. So we had a great responsibility, and that is why we engaged in that struggle, so that gender mainstreaming would become a reality not only in Colombia, but in other places. How could we convey that to other countries and other peace processes that will necessarily have to include a gender perspective? [...] What we realized was that if the gender perspective was not achieved, the problem would not be solved and peace would not be possible because we make up the majority of the population; we are the ones most affected by the impact of the war in every scenario, and if the problem of women is not resolved, the problem of conflict won't be resolved either... (Interview 5)

Regarding the interviewees' recognition of other women and their contributions to the peace process, each one of the women identified those they had worked with closely, mainly their delegation peers or members of the Subcommittee on Gender. It is worth pointing out that normally, during the interviews, the women spoke in greater detail and made more analytical and explicit recognitions of the work of the other women than of their own.

The following is the answer of one of the interviewees to the question regarding the characteristics that led her to be selected to participate. In addition to the position she held in the institution where she works, she thought that "her proactive and perhaps creative attitude toward problems and difficulties, always suggesting

alternative solutions for [...] the negotiation” (Interview 2). had been taken into account for her appointment. On the other hand, the same interviewee says the following about the participation of one of the women whose participation she recognizes:

...she was like a great support, because in the first meetings with the High Commissioner, we were there together to come up with alternatives. She even managed to travel twice to Havana to accompany me, and all the time she was thinking of alternatives. I used to tell her [...]: “Look, it seems as if this is very difficult to negotiate; they don’t want to give in regarding this point ... Can you think of any alternatives?” And she always, always came up with alternatives [...] that showed enormous legal creativity [...]. She was essential. (Interview 2)

All of the interviewees agreed in their high assessment of women’s general contributions to the peace process. They all pointed out that women participated significantly in the research, argumentation, and drafting of the agreements, as well as in the dissemination of the progress reports regarding the process, since they were present at all technical and advisory levels. In this sense, it is a personal, mutual recognition between delegation colleagues and women from other delegations.

There wasn’t a single agreement reached in Havana in which women’s participation was not involved [in the Government delegation], or which wasn’t mediated by women’s participation. (Interview 11)

There were many contributions by the women of the delegation [...] it is important to say that most of us were women; although some left and others arrived, we tried to contribute according to our abilities; it is important for people to visibilize the role of women here. (Interview 8)

Notwithstanding, the greatest participation was concentrated in assistance and advisory responsibilities; there were no women negotiators until the end of 2013 and there were never more than three women negotiators at the Table. The dedication and commitment of the women members of the FARC-EP and Colombian Government delegations was recognized in the following terms by the women belonging to international cooperation agency groups and guarantor countries:

Like little ants, they have gone on doing their work. Key women. I know of tons of women fully committed to this, talking to

people here and there to see how the issue could be positioned and providing support now, after the “No”, as well [...]. It is a strong and organized collective, so I think that [...] it isn't [...] something that will appear [in] the photo but that has been fundamental. (Interview 4)

Although the interviewees recognize the qualified technical work each one of them carried out and they place great value on the work of women who held different positions in spaces related to the Negotiating Table, they pointed out their minority participation in decision-making settings. This affected the possibilities of exercising greater influence regarding the points of the negotiation agenda and promoting gender mainstreaming, and reveals the numerical disadvantage that still exists with respect to the political participation of women as compared to men and the symbolic impact of this situation:

I am convinced of that, that one of the fundamental elements of the struggle against inequality and discrimination is the existence of public models that allow young girls to see that there are opportunities and that they can access them. In this sense, the absence of women as full-fledged delegation members for a long time sort of generated that effect, because it could be understood that those who can act publicly and visibly are only the men, and it gives the message that there are no women there. I think that is inappropriate. (Interview 12)

The interviewed women evidently value the work carried out greatly. On the one hand, they value their contributions to the peace process described in the previous chapter; on the other hand, they value the efforts each one made to comply with her obligations in the best possible manner. However, they are not satisfied with the scarce visibility their excellent work had outside the spaces of the peace process or with the minority participation of women at the decision-making level. As the above testimony shows, the interviewees believe in the importance of visibility and public recognition of women in decision-making roles, in order to inspire young women to continue pushing through the “glass ceiling”. The issue of public recognition will be discussed later on.

Recognition of the Subcommittee on Gender

The Subcommittee on Gender was the most visible space in which women participated during the peace process. In addition to its

political importance for guaranteeing women's rights during the peace agreement, the Subcommittee took shape as a unique scenario in the world for women's participation in a peace process.

The Subcommittee was also a very important space for the women participating in it since, besides consolidating the gender perspective, it allowed them to create alliances among themselves and seek other forms of negotiation and ways to exercise political influence. Several of the interviewees said that, thanks to the space provided by the Subcommittee on Gender, they were able to transform their participation practices. In other words, the construction of their own space, managed by women, in order to address such a complex topic and with scarce precedents, was instrumental for them to reaffirm their influencing capacity among the parties to the negotiation and see it reflected in the agreement that was reached.

From the very beginning, we had thought about establishing some general participation mechanisms, participation regarding the points on the agenda, direct participation... those were the people we invited to the Table; [...] on the basis of the proposals we received, we began to develop the points before the Subcommittee was created, and we realized that did not have an expert in gender perspective, although we all felt sufficiently empowered ...

Some studies we had carried out helped us realize that we had to emphasize the special participation of women, and we included ourselves [...]. We thought of possible solutions, we asked for external advisory, from Sweden. We hired Paola Molano, we felt there was something missing in the points of the agenda, so we thought about the possibility of a Subcommittee on Gender. (Interview 16)

The construction of this space aimed at negotiating and positioning women's rights in whatever peace agreement was reached posed technical and knowledge-related challenges for the women who made up the Subcommittee. For this reason, they asked for the support of the guarantor countries and the United Nations system in order to consolidate that space. The women delegates from international cooperation agencies and from Cuba and Norway provided essential support to the process and earned the special recognition of all the interviewees due to their accompaniment and technical assistance.

The members of the Subcommittee also especially recognize it for having educated the delegations on gender perspective. Yet this was not the only transformation made possible by the Subcommittee: the forms of work, oriented toward a common goal and including

care practices and particular challenges, facilitated the construction of other forms of negotiation and strategic alliances among its members, thus creating a new foundation for the resolution of conflicts at difficult moments.

The women themselves enriched their knowledge through the discussions, the expert advisories, and the conversations they had in the space provided by the Subcommittee:

...that helped us a lot because the women would get prepared here and then go over there [to the other spaces of the peace process] and raise hell. (Interview 7)

The interviewees mentioned that they faced some difficulties during the process of creating the Subcommittee. Nevertheless, the discussions, their common objective, and the training and accompaniment provided by the international delegates allowed them to coordinate in order to reach their common goal that posed new challenges every day.

I think that over time [the delegates] recognized the importance of gender perspective, but that did not happen right away; it involved persuading, talking ... There are still members of the delegations that still don't recognize this ... So it varies a bit ... It is a process of change, of something that is important for the world. (Interview 10)

As explained in the previous chapter, the women were aware of the internal obstacles faced regarding the recognition of the Subcommittee on Gender. That is why, at times, their work seemed to be something marginal with respect to the everyday development of the peace process. Nevertheless, most of the interviewees grant full recognition to that space, not only because of what was achieved there, but also because its formal existence as part of the Table fostered diverse dynamics of a symbolic nature. The women from international cooperation agencies and guarantor countries also perceived this

I believe the formal creation of the Subcommittee on Gender was very important, but I don't think it was the most important Committee of the Table. Being part of it required enormous sacrifices on the part of the women because they also had to be present in other committees and they had to get up very early in order to work. Although the Subcommittee was recognized formally, in practice it would have been good if the heads of the

delegations had given it even more relevance; this is a lesson for future peace processes. (Interview 15)

Recognition of women's organizations and female victims

When asked about the impact of the participation of women in the peace process, most of the interviewees mentioned women's organizations and the efforts they carried out in Colombia in favor of the inclusion of the gender perspective and ensuring women's participation in the Negotiating Table, which, in turn, led to the creation of the Subcommittee on Gender.

Special recognition was granted to the visits of female victims and civil society members and the meetings they held with the delegations. According to most of the interviewees, if it had not been for these visits, the parties would not have understood the relevance of including the gender perspective in the agreements:

That is, thanks to your work [women's organizations], the gender perspective in the agreements is not ... our invention, no; it was thanks to the contributions of all the women's collectives who pushed us, who encouraged us, who sent us proposals, who demanded it of us, who visited us in Cuba. So, we didn't do the bulk of the work, you did, through your advocacy, your protests, your demanding it of us, your proposals, so ... Let's say we were simply an instrument to channel that information so it would get there, but, again, you have been doing the bulk of the work for thirty years. (Interview 1)

The above reflects the legitimacy granted by the interviewees to the work carried out by women victims and women's organizations in order to promote gender issues. They were recognized due to the direct influence they had on the Negotiating Table regarding women's participation and the inclusion of topics that were crucial for women in the peacebuilding process.

[The] female victims [were] behind the whole process [...]; they were the ones who actually made possible the existence of the Subcommittee, but they also enriched it because all of the proposals they sent were inputs for the Subcommittee; we did not invent anything; really, we just conveyed their ideas. (Interview 5)

This testimony clearly expresses the recognition of women's organizations and female victims by the members of the

Subcommittee on Gender and shows the strategic importance of the alliance among those groups, as explained in the previous chapter.

3.2 The recognition of women's participation by the other members of the delegations

When assessing the recognition of women's participation in the peace process by other people, the interviewees reflected particularly on the attitude of their male peers and heads of delegation toward the hard work they carried out. This recognition is associated with the positioning they achieved in the discussion and negotiation spaces, which varied as women took ownership of their roles and transformed them at the Negotiating Table.

As stated above, most of the women participated in technical or advisory roles. Although decision-making was usually in the hands of men, the women's participation and political positioning in decision-making settings changed during the peace process: they were appointed as full-fledged members of both delegations and the Subcommittee on Gender was established. One of the interviewees recalls how she began participating in the Negotiating Table:

...the spokesmen were [...names of male negotiators]. Ours was [...name of male negotiator] and then the rest of the Secretariat was there, and, finally, us. At the beginning we were very shy because we were not familiar with the dynamics of the discussion ... Now we are not. (Interview 7)

This transformation took place mostly due to the women's increasing self-assurance when discussing the political agendas of the agreements and even when carrying out their technical work. This was corroborated especially by those who provided technical support for the construction of Chapter 4 of the Agreement – regarding conflict victims and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace – and the members of the Subcommittee on Gender. The interviewees also mentioned how they gradually earned political recognition in the committees and subcommittees in which they participated due to their qualified and well-argued technical interventions. This allowed them to exercise enough influence so that their political proposals were included in the resulting documents.

There are clear differences in the ways the women perceive the recognition by the other participants in the peace process of their work and of them collectively and as individuals. Opinions in this

regard vary greatly, although most of the testimonies agree on the fact that much more needs to be done in terms recognition. The following excerpts illustrate the diversity of perceptions referred to:

We had bosses who greatly recognized our work [...] always in their public speeches; he made many very nice acknowledgments of all the women who have worked in this. [...] they are all willing to recognize, very committed to equality. Women's contributions were perceived and received in the same manner as those of men. (Interview 12)

Our role hasn't been sufficiently valued or recognized. The FARC has to declare itself an anti-patriarchal organization, we are working on that. For the first time in the FARC's history, this was materialized during a lecture. (Interview 7)

I think it was a marginal role, unfortunately. I am telling you about what I saw when I saw it, because the process has changed a lot. I believe that if the same value were given to women's work and perspectives during the negotiation process, we would have made more progress [...]. The men are good guys. They are not macho types who go around mistreating women; they try to recognize it all the time [the work of women]. But the truth is that despite their good intentions and the respect I know they have for all the women present, the negotiation is led and handled by men, with a male style. (Interview 3)

It is also important to mention that the women agree that the recognition they received from the most visible actors, especially when it was expressed publicly, strengthened their political positioning. They also believe that having worked together on the topics that were difficult to position on the agenda earned them general recognition of their work in Havana.

3.3 Assessments by the women's close circles of relations

This section addresses the manner in which persons close to the interviewees assessed their participation in the peace process and how they facilitated or supported it, from their own perspective. In the case of women working for the Government or international cooperation agencies, the close circles include family and friends. In the case of the FARC-EP women, the close circles are mainly made up of male and female members of their organization, with whom they have personal relations and share their experiences more closely. Some of them, however, also mentioned the support of their families,

with whom they had the chance to reunite, in many cases thanks to the spaces opened up by the peace process.

The stories told by the women members of the Government delegation show how important it was for them to have their participation in the negotiation process recognized by friends and family. Some of them referred to the difficulties and challenges they faced when they had to leave their families and to the reactions of their close relations, which, in most cases, provided support and expressed a personal or family commitment to the task they were about to undertake .

My son and my son's father, my family, everyone, supported me a lot. I was going to resign due to the personal difficulties, but my son told me not to, he said he supported me. My friends and family admire me greatly, they thank me a lot; I have friends who were going to vote *no* and they voted *yes* because of me. This time, all of them, regardless of their side, voted *yes*. (Interview 3)

I feel very privileged because I never had anyone object to my participation; they are all very loving, they are proud of me, they celebrate, enjoy, feel honored, feel part of the process and even think that they participated a bit in it. My mother, for example, wrote progress reports and sent her guests the booklet with the explanation of the process. (Interview 12)

Thus, most of the women received support from their families, not merely in terms of recognizing the importance of their participation in the peace process, but also by facilitating, through concrete actions, their stay in Havana. Some relatives even disseminated the contents of the agreements regarding each point on the agenda among their acquaintances, and carried out pedagogical activities before the plebiscite.

Notwithstanding that general experience, some of the women faced considerable difficulties due to their prolonged absences from home, away from their families. The FARC-EP delegation lived in Cuba during most of the process, so the women were separated from their friends and partners for a long time. However, it must be noted that they are used to those types of changes, given the military structure and regime of their organization.

The recognition these women value most in their testimonies is that of their close circle, that is, the guerrillas, the grassroots militants of the different FARC-EP fronts throughout the Colombian territory.

The recognition they got from these people while carrying out pedagogical activities related to the Agreement in the camps and also during the 10th National Guerrilla Conference of the FARC-EP¹⁷ filled them with satisfaction and pride:

When we arrived at the Conference, we were surprised to see that not just the women but also the male delegates, everyone, highlighted the gender perspective. We received many expressions of gratitude from the women delegates, who said so in all their interventions; that great decision deriving from the agreements was something they mentioned at the Conference. There were people from all of the FARC-EP units in the country; at lunch time, all the women wanted to meet us; they said they were very happy with what we had done; we have an enormous team and in every unit we have men and women willing to make the gender perspective a success. (Interview 5)

This recognition of the women participating in Havana by the entire FARC-EP structure in the Colombian territories, expressed in the diverse spaces designated for pedagogical activities regarding the agreements, provided the women with a personal motivation to continue educating others on gender perspective and keep reflecting and transforming patriarchal practices within the organization and beyond.

The commander [...] also thought the gender issue was important and sent us to talk about that with the coca growers [...], then someone got up and said: “Ok, Ok, let’s get back to the drug issue, which is the important thing. And a peasant stood up and said: “You don’t think the gender issue is important here?” [...] Then the coordinator got up and said: “Well, comrades, everyone here knows we’ve had many complaints from the population, there is a lot of abuse, there are too many drunks ... That has to change, you heard what our colleague said”. So we had total support. (Interview 6)

On the other hand, the peace process made it possible for some of the FARC-EP women who were in Havana to reunite with their families and reestablish their relationship. The women talked about the difficulties their families had faced when they had decided to join the guerrillas, but also about the recognition of their participation in the peace process. Their decision to do politics without weapons was received positively by their families and motivated their commitment to the peace process.

17. The Conference was held from September 17 to September 23 of 2016 in the Yarí plains, municipality of San Vicente del Caguán, department of Caquetá.

They are very happy. My family [...] has supported me, they have understood my decision. It has been tough because we have been the victims of persecution and repression because of the decision I made [...] so, ever since I got here, they have felt great peace, because they say that when I was at the camp, I could die at any moment, so for them, it has been a great, great relief. [...] We could also say that it has been very nice because that distant family that I... well that I didn't see for security reasons, but also because many of them are not organized and don't belong to the process, well I thought they might reproach me, but it has been extra nice because everyone has written to me, they write to me via Facebook, they are always waiting for news. I think my being here has encouraged their commitment to the process. [...]. Now they are all in favor of the "yes" vote; they watch all the interviews; all of this has been very beautiful and very constructive. (Interview 5)

For them [my family] it's very different, because they come from a very small village; when people found out I had joined the guerrillas, their world fell apart; there was a lot of gossip in the village; the press hounded them; they had to leave their home; [it was] a very difficult time for them, especially because they had not chosen that. When I got here to the dialogues, they were able to tell the lady at the store and the neighbors that their daughter was participating in the peace process, because peace is something positive. [...]. There was a recent interview that was very positive [about her] and that was important for them. [...]. We are in contact almost every day and I keep them up to date on what is happening here; now they are very interested in the process. (Interview 6)

The women from international cooperation agencies and guarantor countries were also recognized by friends and families. In several cases, those persons do not live in Colombia or Cuba, so it was through their direct contact with the women that they managed to stay informed about the process and its importance. The members of those circles have all recognized the importance of the women's contribution to the termination of the armed conflict in Colombia.

My friends always thought that my work was very important and interesting, and we talked about it. (Interview 10)

The participation of some of the women in the peace process was not made public, and for a long period of time only a few people knew of it. However, when their work in favor of Colombia's peace became known, their families and friends recognized their contributions.

For me, one of the most gratifying things was my father; my father that day, I mean, my father did know I had traveled to Havana many times, but he didn't know exactly why. I had told them: "No, I will be traveling, I will be away", just like that, eh... My father's pride when he found out I was there contributing, right? And listening to me read. For him that was super important, and for me, that's...well it's gratifying, after having left Spain so many years ago [...] for them to get an idea, no? of what you are doing and what it's like, well it's important. It also happened with my colleagues and close relations who didn't know about my role in the process. So, when it became known, they recognized my role. (Interview 4)

Thus, the recognition granted to the interviewees, regardless of their roles, by their close circles of relations filled them with satisfaction and pride, and encouraged them to keep working in favor of peace and of the rights of Colombian women and men. Overall, the recognition by family, friends, and close relations links the political and the affective, because, as the women stated, their responsibility was greater once they knew they were participating in the peace process in their own behalf but also in behalf of all those who supported them.

3.4 Visibility and public recognition

As we have stated above, when we speak about the visibility and public recognition of the women in the peace process, we are referring to the interviewees' perception of how their participation in the peace process has been recognized by society as a whole.

In general, most of the interviewees stated that visibilization is insufficient, and that the media have not paid enough attention to the women's spaces, initiatives, and achievements. In the following excerpt, one of the women comments on visibilization of women's initiatives in the media. To the question regarding the public recognition of women's participation in the peace process, she answered:

No, I think everything is missing. It is missing because although [...] the Subcommittee exists, we are doing many things. But if we look at the media and their interest in the matter [there is nothing]. (Interview 5)

The women belonging to the Government and FARC-EP delegations have different perceptions regarding media coverage of their activities since they joined the peace negotiations.

According to the FARC-EP women, the media have approached them because they are interested in finding out who they are, and on the basis of an imaginary that is not necessarily correct or positive. Given the circumstances of the conflict before the negotiations, female guerrillas were not recognized as political actors. For this reason, the media focused on certain aspects that the women considered superficial or unimportant in the context of their participation in the process.

Almost all of them came to interview the men, the commanders; later, as the months and years passed, they came to interview the women, but their questions were silly [...]: “Did you have children?” “Did you have an abortion?” Ugly questions, kind of like to destroy you; but they never asked “What have you contributed to the Table? Or, “ What is your view of politics in Colombia? They never asked us the questions they asked the commanders. (Interview 8)

The women members of the Government delegation feel that there has been practically no visibilization of their participation. They believe the media have not recognized their work, and that the only public recognition they have gotten was the mention of their names –in some cases- by delegation members in different public presentations.

Women outside the delegation had a similar perception of the situation and pointed out that the recognition given was important but insufficient. They considered positive the support to the women of the Subcommittee and the work carried out by diverse sectors and actors, both in the context of the peace process in Havana and elsewhere, when objections to gender ideology became rooted in public opinion.

In some cases there have been more public recognitions: Humberto de la Calle recognized Elena Ambrosi [...] precisely when he read Communiqué 70 and highlighted her important role, [...]; some people have been given public recognition at key moments, but others have remained more invisible. (Interview 4)

The response given by the negotiation leaders, their teams, the Government, and, of course, civil society and several media [to the so-called gender ideology] has really been a recognition. In this sense, I think that what has happened in the last month and a half has been interesting in terms of recognition. However, I believe we still have a long way to go in terms of structural recognition of women's rights and of their contributions to the Agreement. (Interview 15)

In general, the women thought their efforts had not been made visible enough or publicly recognized, whether because the importance of their work was distorted or not recognized, or due to the lack of public appreciation of the relevance of gender perspective in a peace process and in political processes in general.

In particular, the women consider that the events surrounding the inclusion of gender perspective in the peace agreement, specifically the stigmatization of "gender ideology", was a harsh blow to their work, one that affected the recognition of their achievements by broad sectors of Colombian society. They think that casting doubts regarding the intentions behind the inclusion of the gender perspective not only affected the recognition of women's rights, but also showed that, in the struggle for equality, society is willing to backtrack with respect to what had been accomplished in the last decades.

Conclusions

The recognition of women's participation in political spaces is part of the exercise aimed at visibilizing that which has historically remained invisible. Women have participated in different political scenarios throughout the history of humanity, but, in the majority of the records of such events, their participation has not been given a central position. Neither have their contributions to the processes in which they have participated been visibly recognized.

One of the objectives of our research was to recognize the participation of women in the peace process between the National Government and the FARC-EP. The recognition of women's roles and contributions helps break the glass ceiling, since it shows younger generations that there it is possible for women to access decision-making levels, and encourages them to strive for them.

The recognition of the interviewees' participation in the peace negotiations in Havana took place at different levels. This research project allowed the women to talk about their participation and inputs and acknowledge, through our conversations, that they had made fundamental contributions to the achievements of the peace process.

Nevertheless, the public visibility of women is still insufficient, especially that of women who did technical and advisory work, which was the case of most of the women who participated in the peace process. The interviews gave the women the chance to talk and reaffirm the value of the work of other women participating in the process. This mutual recognition consolidates what they believe to be their achievements during said process, since it presupposes the existence of a different form of relating to one another and of working –particularly in the Subcommittee on Gender– that goes beyond the process itself.

In terms of recognition, it is important to highlight the value the interviewees placed on the Subcommittee on Gender. For the women who participated in it, that space became a political proposal, a commitment that went beyond the duties they had been initially summoned for, and the setting in which they could talk to women's movements, become familiar with feminist positions, and ask themselves about their political roles and the overall historical recognition of women in peace processes. The interviewees agree that the Subcommittee was the most visible participation space for women and that its most significant achievement was the inclusion of the gender perspective in the agreements.

Their recognition of the women's movement is linked to participation of the interviewed women in different spaces. They emphasized that the movement encouraged and helped them shape the gender perspective and inspired them to rethink their role in a peace process that would be innovative in terms of women's participation.

These ideas are not reflected in the external recognition of the women who participated in the process. Although their close circles of relations proudly followed their work and fostered their motivation and commitment, that recognition is associated to the affection deriving from closeness and it does not extend to the general public.

The women also felt that their contributions, work, and achievements did not get the attention they deserved in the media

and public opinion. If to this scarce visibility we add the campaigns against gender ideology, the women's efforts in the negotiation are visibilized on the basis of biased information, thus hindering the continued participation of women in the design of public policies, as well as the positioning of the gender perspective in those policies.

Finally, the women recognized their participation in this process as an opportunity for personal transformation. They mentioned that the lessons learned from the national and international advisors on gender, as well as their own studies of gender and feminism, had transformed their political practice and their awareness regarding the importance and responsibility of their participation in the peace process, as women able to influence political agendas and visibilize women's roles. Their capacity as political spokeswomen was also transformed since they acquired knowledge and confidence to position their ideas, even in spaces that were less than receptive to gender perspective and the participation of women.

4. THE ISSUE OF CARE AND WOMEN IN THE COLOMBIAN PEACE PROCESS

This chapter addresses the contribution of care work to the peace conversations between the National Government and the FARC-EP in Havana. In the interviews carried out with women from the Government and FARC-EP delegations, as well as from international cooperation agencies and guarantor countries, we asked about women's contributions to the peace process in the area of care-related activities. Several of the women gave accounts of the care practices among them and with respect to the male members of their delegations; on that basis, we analyzed who carried out these practices, how they took place, and what importance was attributed to that work during the peace process.

Care is a daily activity involving all of the persons that inhabit a social space; it is, therefore, a vital necessity that forms part of interdependency relations. Nevertheless –as mentioned in the starting points chapter–, care has been traditionally associated with women and the private sphere, and the work carried out by those in charge of these activities is not usually mentioned as a contribution to collective achievements. Moreover, it is rarely made evident that, in the short, medium, and long terms, peace negotiations and peacebuilding activities entail daily care practices. For this reason, we consider it necessary to highlight those care practices and processes, as well as those responsible for them, as part of the recognition of the women who participated in the most recent Colombian peace process.

When we speak of care work, we are referring to the contribution to the sustainability of processes and to the persons who are part of them. Therefore, we include in this category both remunerated and unremunerated activities, bearing in mind that the economic impact of this type of work in any field whatsoever does not depend on the remuneration, but rather on its contribution to the sustenance of

life and the wellbeing of persons. There are two types of care work: *taking care of living or other spaces*, which involves their maintenance, cleaning, embellishment, and logistic adaptation, and *looking after persons*, which involves care of the body, for example through a proper diet and daily emotional accompaniment.

In order to discuss the experience of care, as described by the women during the interviews, we used two categories: on the one hand, *care work*, which includes both remunerated and unremunerated tasks that require connecting with others in order to satisfy one's needs; for example, food services, cleaning, and assistance to vulnerable persons, among others. On the other hand, we have *care practices*, which refer to people's everyday attitudes and actions aimed at their own wellbeing or that of others.

Care is fundamental in peace processes, since it is an environment that fosters empathy and acknowledges the basic needs and wellbeing of others, thus humanizing those who are perceived as part of the opposing group, since the world of care values life above all else. In this sense, care contributes to the revaluation of the meaning of life, which had lost its centrality during the long years of war. The recognition of care is, therefore, a key aspect to analyze in peacebuilding processes.

It is important to highlight that the physical and emotional exhaustion generated by the negotiations, as well as the challenges and difficulties faced by the participants, add to the enormous responsibility entailed by peacebuilding and pose serious threats for the sustainability of the conversations. Care work helps prevent the exhaustion of the participants and overcome the obstacles arising during negotiations, because it ensures that the basic daily needs necessary for wellbeing are satisfied and that logistic aspects function properly, thus ensuring a sustainable environment for the peace negotiations.

This chapter is divided into three sections and a conclusion. The first section addresses the manner in which persons who carry out care and logistics work are identified and recognized, as well as their role in the peace process. The second section shows how the interviewees perceive the everyday care practices among themselves and with respect to others, how they value those practices, and what their implications are for women. The final part discusses the self-care practices of the women during their stay in Havana.

4.1 Daily care work during the peace process

During the interviews we informed the women of the importance –both for this research project and for the memory of the process– of recognizing all the women who were in some way connected to the peace process in Havana. We emphasized the particular need to recognize those women responsible for care work (cleaning or cooking in the houses or meeting places in Havana) and those in charge of providing special attention to the negotiators and ensuring the material conditions for the conversations and meetings to take place, given that the persons who do this kind of work usually remain invisible.

All of the interviewees agreed on the lack of visibility of these roles, but, in general, they did not remember most of the women who carried them out. Therefore, it was impossible to find out exactly how many women did care work during the years of the peace process and who they were. It is clear, nevertheless, that there were some institutional structures that facilitated the logistics and care work necessary for the negotiations.

The women from the Government delegation identified Fondo Paz as the organization in charge of managing logistic support for the entire delegation, and mentioned María Inés Restrepo, the director, and Patricia, who was only identified by her first name¹⁸:

A person who was always there and has not been very visible although she facilitated all of the operational aspects was María Inés Restrepo from Fondo Paz... (Interview 2).

Patricia was in charge of the logistics; Fondo Paz was responsible for logistics and Patricia did all of that. (Interview 13)

The external advisors also recognized the women from their organizations responsible for logistical work:

Look, in that sort of thing, you need logistical support; those things were very important for the women here ... (Interview 11)

The above were responses to the question of which women contributed to the process and how they participated.

18. Her last name did not come up in any of the interviews.

The operational work carried out by the above-mentioned women ensured that the necessary conditions for the realization of the conversations were met, insofar as they provided work materials, spaces, plane tickets, and housing for the male and female negotiators and advisors.

Historically, these tasks have occupied the same marginal place as care work, with which they are often linked, for example, when logistical work includes guaranteeing food services. In our specific case, logistical and care work were connected, given that their purpose was to meet the needs of the Negotiating Table and its associated spaces.

The interviewees recognized the importance of these tasks in the functioning of the processes, but they did not identify any women other than those mentioned above. Moreover, that recognition focused on the institution and not on the individuals involved. This leads to depersonalizing that type of work and contributes to the invisibilization of those carrying it out.

The women identified the persons who carried out care work on the basis of where they lived while in Havana. Those who stayed in hotels did not identify anyone in particular, while those who stayed in houses mentioned the names of those who did care work in those spaces. The purpose of the questions asked was to recognize the women who did this type of job. One of the interviewees, who explained how care work was carried out in the houses in Havana and valued its importance, also included the men who worked alongside the women in that type of activity in her recognition:

... all the women who are part of the team that helps us, that provide assistance in that type of thing [care activities...] I think they were fundamental. [...] we even felt bad because we are used to doing everything, so having people help us, take care of us... has been really nice. [...]. In each house, and that needs to be said, there are also men who cook, there are also men who help us [...] there is also a chef, but also those who serve meals,, here they call them *gastronómicos*, who are always ready to serve breakfast, coffee [...] that's very nice, there are no distinctions and those men are not ashamed of their job, they do it very professionally ... (Interview 5)

The previous excerpt emphasizes the relevance for the interviewees of those in charge of care activities in the houses where the

delegations stayed. It also acknowledges the way these care activities were structured in the houses, where some were responsible for food preparation, others for serving, and others for cleaning tasks. According to the women's accounts, in each house there were at least two people in charge of food services and cleaning. None of the women ever referred to the persons who did care work in the Table's work space.

The entire care structure, which included that operating in both the formal and "public" spaces of the peace process and in the more private space of the living quarters, provided permanent support for the sustainability of the peace process, since it ensured conditions of physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing for those participating in the discussions.

There was, however, a symbolic difference between the houses and the meeting rooms. Although the Table's and the committees' work spaces were fundamental, since the delegates spent most of their time there, it was in the houses that they rested and had the chance to escape from the often tense formal dynamics of the negotiations, and where psycho-emotional practices were generated. This allowed the women to establish closer relationships with those present in their living quarters, relationships that went beyond the pragmatic aspect of care work, given that, in difficult situations (such as illness, for example), those same persons took on the role of caregivers and carried out additional tasks

There you get sick a lot, so those women were the ones who took care of me and pampered me, and my mother sent them gifts. A couple of times they invited me to their homes, very kind of them ... and they would offer a little massage... (Interview 1)

...there is a woman called Sandra, a Cuban who works in food services, who has been very special with us. It's like having someone, like a friend you can trust. So she has been very special, as a person, as a human being [...]. When I was sick, there were very few of us here, so I practically had to deal with my illness on my own, because they were at the Table. So they were very special and looked after me, took care of me; Cubans are very human, [...] and the women, especially the women, those who serve us, they are very beautiful persons. (Interview 9)

These conversations with the women made it possible to get to know them beyond their work and find out about their political opinions:

I think that we all, in each house, have one (a *gastronómica*) to remember especially, and it's great because she's not just doing her job of "I'm going to get you some coffee", but she also knows about the process [...]. These women are very politicized, they know about history, they know about the process. (Interview 6)

All of the interviewees agreed on the importance of the women who cared for them and pointed out that that care made possible their participation in the peace process or the sustainability of the process itself, since it ensured daily wellbeing. They acknowledged that everyday life is one of the scenarios most marked by conflict in social life, and, for this reason, the space of care helped reduce conflict and maximized the dynamics of the recognition of others as human. The women's assessment of this aspect varied depending on the type of care each interviewee had required and her particular circumstances, or on the type of bond they established with those providing care.

The interviewees were able to build personal "maps" of the people, mainly women, who carried out care and logistical work, on the basis of their direct relationship with them, as well as of the bonds, affinities, and subjectivities they developed. The women interviewed included Colombian women who carried out care work, and the external advisors highlighted the contribution of women from their own delegations.

Some of the women also described their own personal support networks as essential for their participation in the process. Given their long stays in Havana, women who were mothers faced more difficulties and challenges when participating in the process, and had they not found people to help care for their children, it would have been impossible for them to leave home. Therefore, they recognized the support given in this respect by friends, mothers, sisters, and other women close to them.

In my personal case, the support of my family was fundamental, with respect to looking after the children, and of those people who took care of the housekeeping, family, close friends, work colleagues, my mother, my sisters ... (Interview 16)

The interviewees' accounts made it possible to establish the relevance of care activities in the peace conversations. However, there were difficulties identifying all of those who carried out those tasks, given

that this recognition arose from the private spaces and experiences of each one of the participants in the conversations. In any case, the extent of the recognition is linked to the affection involved in the relationship established with those who carried out care work and to the care itself.

4.2 Care as *feminine*

Care has been historically related to responsibilities, attitudes, and tasks that correspond mainly to women. The progress made in terms of the recognition of discrimination and exclusion associated with the sexual division of labor is reflected in the interviews with the women delegates. They are critical of such a division with respect to care work, believe that those tasks can be carried out by both men and women, and they dignify such work as a profession. Moreover, they recognize that individuals are responsible for their own personal care. A woman belonging to the FARC-EP believes that a great achievement of the Subcommittee on Gender was the transformation of the imaginaries and practices of some of them regarding their initial role of “doing chores” while the men were at the meetings. (Interview 8)

Although the interviewees admitted that it is not the exclusive obligation of women to carry out care work, the only mention of men in that role was the one presented in the previous section. Thus, although the women do not make it explicit, we could say that their recognition that care work is decent work that is not the exclusive responsibility of women does not entail a significant change in masculine participation in care work in general, nor that the labor conditions of those carrying out that type of work are those of a worthy profession.

The interviewees expressed their perceptions regarding care practices and their relation to gender. In this respect, they spoke of how these practices took place, who carried them out, and what their importance was. Some of the answers state that care practices are natural to women and that they are responsible for them. Other interviewees do not believe there is such a thing as a feminine essence and, therefore, stated that both men and women could do the same jobs, since they have the same capacities and, therefore, the same responsibilities. Nonetheless, they pointed out that the majority of the persons in charge of care practices in Havana were women.

Overall, the interviewees acknowledged that care practices played a fundamental role in the consolidation of the peace process and facilitated their participation, because they helped create bonds and solve problems by enhancing accumulated knowledge on creating empathetic environments and management of everyday conflicts.

In line with the above, some of the women said that one of the contributions of the women who participated in the process was mediating in and transforming conflicts at difficult moments of the negotiation, given their sociocultural preparation in mediation and conciliation. This is evident in the following testimonies:

I believe there is something that sometimes... I have a problem with this idea, but I think it is a fact, and it is that ... for example, Elena's role or Mónica's role helped unblock problematic conversations, so then, specifically in the negotiation, I think that... I don't know if it's because of the way they were raised, or because of gender, or whatever, but I do believe they helped unblock [...] many difficult conversations. (Interview 13)

As I told you, I don't believe there are essential characteristics of women that make them more so and so, and I don't believe there is anything that makes a woman more of a mother; I don't think that women are more conciliatory either, neither of the two [...]. But I do think there [was] a key woman in the process [...], who helped generate alternative meeting grounds. (Interview 12)

When talking about the way women participated in the peace process, the interviewees identified situations involving care practices that took place in different spaces and with different actors. These experiences took on different expressions depending on the delegation the women belonged to and their roles in that setting. Some took on the role of looking after their housemates; for example, “the care giving role she (María Paulina) played [regarding] the other delegation members” (Interview 14). Other women performed that role among themselves and toward their delegation colleagues and people they shared negotiation spaces with, for example, the Communications team or the Subcommittee on Gender.

...it was like really cool with them, when we celebrated the birthday of one of the Government women together; they had the chance to do so, since, well, for security reasons we didn't have access to many things, So it was nice: “What would you like to eat? Is there anything you're craving? We understand that...” In fact, they brought us things to eat, right? I like bread

from Bogotá, so they brought me bread from Bogotá. So, “Hey, look, I brought you something”; it was those types of details that started breaking down the rigid format, and it was really positive [...] since we are still in touch. “Do you feel sick, do you need anything”, a lot of solidarity on their part, very nice. (Interview 5)

Women are sociable, we put candy on the table, pictures of puppies, [...] and bonds of friendship are created. (Interview 6)

Participation in peace processes on the basis of care helps break down the friend/enemy dichotomy, because care is a daily act of recognition of the humanity of others and of the value of their lives, so it is fundamental in transforming the perception of those who are different or opposed to us. Given the socially constructed roles of women as caregivers, they had the chance to unblock stalled negotiations, as mentioned above. The following excerpts show how women performed care practices, from attention to details that would make the meetings more pleasant to ensuring the wellbeing of their male and female delegation colleagues.

The interviewees cited in this section (Interviews 5, 6, 12, 13, and 15) recognized that these practices helped resolve conflict situations during the talks, and stated that without those practices, the peace agreement might not have been achieved.

One of the accounts refers to the visit of Zainab Hawa Bangura, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, who stated that:

...in moments of crisis in a political process, such as this one, it is the women who usually hold together the network that supports the process so that it doesn't fall apart; and she called on the women from both FARC and Government to perform that role, to go beyond their political differences and, as Colombian women and in behalf of the Colombian women who were waiting for a solution back home, to make an extra effort to hold the process together (Interview 15).

Accepting the invitation to take on a different role and form alliances with women from the opposition delegation in order to save the peace process has been recognized in various spaces as one of the main contributions of the women who participated in the process. This recognition must not be construed on the basis of the naturalization of women as caregivers, but rather, on the basis of

the knowledge the women have acquired and built historically in this regard, as well as of the strategic use they gave to sociocultural roles that, in most cases, have become spaces of invisibilization and discrimination.

This is also related to other aspects that the women identified as “feminine” and that allowed them to accomplish various goals, among them the consolidation of the Subcommittee on Gender. Despite recognizing that the creation of the Subcommittee implied conflicts that were transformed over time, some of the interviewees identified shared care practices that facilitated the creation of alliances:

It was there that we started working with them in a completely feminine space, because initially there were no men from our delegation; there was, however one from the other delegation, Rubín Morro, only one... Then Andrés García joined, from the office too [...] but it was a totally feminine space and the change was radical: it was a much kinder space, though we had some strong discussions. Hilde used to bring us gummy bears, chocolates, they brought us something too [...] to get to know one another [...], then we started working, and there was much more interaction. [...]. For me, compared to other spaces, this was a very pleasant, cordial space, a space for team work ... I'll lend you my computer ... I'll lend you my USB... Come on, I'll take you...and so on. It was very – in my point of view, I think the Subcommittee became a unified team, it wasn't them and us but a single team ... (Interview 1)

These practices were associated with other aspects having to do with women's way of socializing, which facilitate a negotiation process: empathy, sociability, conflict resolution skills, and the ability to persuade the opposite party. The women also said that those spaces occupied mainly by women and in which care practices occur are less hostile. Another interviewee pointed out the following:

...work dynamics in an office made up of mostly women, well they [are] friendlier for everyone, with logics of dialogue, instead of always [competing] with others for recognition”. (Interview 13)

The women, particularly the members of the Subcommittee on Gender, incorporated and collectivized care practices that enhanced their overall wellbeing and prepared them to face tense situations from a standpoint in which they recognized their interdependency as human beings. That is, care took root among them as a strategy

–that was not necessarily a conscious one throughout the entire process– to deal with adversity, scenarios of conflict, and unequal practices. This effort and commitment, shared by all of the women, was made known to their delegation colleagues. The following anecdote evinces the importance of care as an aspect that facilitated women’s participation:

One of the women from the Government delegation was breastfeeding, and she knew I was traveling to Colombia, so she approached me and said: “I know you have a UN passport and since they don’t give you any trouble, I was wondering if you could take back the milk I have drawn for my baby in Colombia...” It was a very interesting experience because we had to take care of the logistics so she could do it in Cuba, where it was very hot, to keep the milk refrigerated until flight time, talk to airport authorities so they would let me get through with the milk; I was traveling with a group of victims and they asked me: “What are you carrying?” And I said: “Breast milk, but it isn’t mine”. The important thing is that it made it to its final destination. (Interview 3)

This experience highlights the importance of care work and practices in making possible women’s participation in the process. The women identified the fundamental role of care and, therefore, they took on those responsibilities at times in order to achieve the objectives they had set for themselves through their participation.

The women described care as one of their main contributions to the peace process, given that the above-mentioned practices kept the negotiations going when they seemed to be at risk. Nevertheless reinforcing the idea of care as something essentially feminine has its problems. One of them is the possibility that men end up giving it a secondary place in peacebuilding, thus turning it into a role valued mainly by women and that they should take on or be assigned to. Another problem identified by our research (with respect not only to care but also to other practices thought to be essentially feminine) is that women could be overburdened with responsibilities during a peace process. This will be discussed in detail in the following section.

4.3 Difficulties regarding self-care

Participating in a negotiation process aimed at putting an end to an armed conflict as complex as the Colombian one implied a

high level of physical and emotional exhaustion for those men and women directly involved in it. Apart from the challenges entailed by a negotiation, being far away from their families, heavy work schedules, and prolonged coexistence with work colleagues contributed to that situation.

Therefore, it is possible to assume that the persons who participated in the work committees ended up neglecting their self-care to some extent. However, our research found that self-care posed more difficulties for the women due to several circumstances: one has to do with the belief that care, sacrifice, and work are essentially feminine. Evidence of this is the fact that part of the care work that sustained the negotiations, both day by day and at the most difficult moments, was assumed by the women in their bodies. This calls attention to the need to visibilize this type of contribution so that future processes generate conditions so that women do not have to manage the emotional, private, and daily care spaces at the expense of their own wellbeing.

During the interviews, all of the women mentioned some of the personal difficulties they faced during the peace process: some are related to work schedules, others to the challenge of leaving their children behind for long periods of time, and others to the family conflicts deriving from their frequent and long trips. These difficulties shortened their hours of sleep and increased their worries about family problems, which were compounded by the emotional challenges posed by the negotiation process. In general, it can be said that the women's level of exhaustion was high.

Although personal exhaustion is inevitable in a peace process, given the challenges it poses, there are aspects that mainly affected women. The most notable one had to do with how the meetings and work sessions of the Subcommittee on Gender took place. The organization of the Subcommittee was not as formal as that of other spaces in the structure of the peace process, so time was not allotted to its meetings in the collective agendas of the Table and the delegations:

Being there implied enormous sacrifices because the women had to attend other committees and get up very early to work [on the Subcommittees' issues]. (Interview 15)

This dynamic reduced the time women had for rest and other self-care practices. However, although the work in the Subcommittee entailed

additional work hours every day due to its faulty organization, the women thought it was a vital space in order to move their proposals forward.

...the Subcommittee was not given space within the structure of the dialogues; it was always “we’ll meet at eight at [...]’s] house and work there. (Interview 6)

...no one ever said: “Today the issue is the Subcommittee on Gender and we are meeting here”; we were the ones who always had to agree on times. “Listen, do you think we can meet at such a time?” “No, I have such and such...” “Then let’s do it in the afternoon, let’s do it at ...” So the work sessions were tough, working overtime, being in other sessions. (Interview 5)

The positioning and recognition of the Subcommittee on Gender are discussed in another chapter; however, this peculiar characteristic relates to the issue of care, since it was assumed that women could fulfill different functions and take on tasks additional to their technical responsibilities in the process, as explained by one of the interviewees as she expressed her perception of the responsibilities of the women in the technical team of the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace:

...I feel that the High Commissioner’s team was mainly made up of women that helped with logistics and everything else...they did like... multi-work, multi-tasking, from providing concrete inputs... to also helping out with logistics; so they were always there ... (Interview 2)

This idea of working tirelessly, doing multiple jobs, and sacrificing self-care has to do with the above-mentioned tendency to associate care with the feminine, since women have been historically conceived as caregivers, and men as care receivers, as persons who depend more on others (like elderly persons, children, persons with reduced mobility, neurodiverse persons).

Thus, culturally it has been assumed that women do not need care. This imaginary is present in those women willing to work more than they have to and sacrifice their rest hours, as well as in the men who assume that women can or should work more than they do.

Women are the ones who do the work, they materialize things. So the men used to like arrive and ask “what have you thought about” and I would say “I’ve thought this, and that, and the

other thing”. So they approved and gave instructions. And we stayed there working, fleshing out all those ideas. (Interview 3)

This attitude towards work is also associated with the historical difficulty of recognizing women’s work, as discussed in previous chapters, which, in turn, reinforces the idea that women have to work more than men in order to obtain the same results or the same recognition. In the context of the peace process, women made up the majority and there was no competition with men in similar positions; however, they were a minority in decision-making venues.

In addition to taking on more responsibilities than men, women also took on another responsibility that contributed to their exhaustion: looking after others and the sustainability of the Table. It has been recognized that without the great technical efforts of the women who participated in the Negotiating Table, the peace agreement as we know it would not have materialized.

Nonetheless, the peace process replicated the conditions of inequality existing in society. There were differences in the division of labor between the sexes, and care was assumed to be the responsibility of women, which brought about consequences for their physical and emotional health and affected their family environments.

Conclusions

To conclude, the women interviewed highlighted care work as fundamental for everyday life and for their participation in the peace process, as well as for the development of their meetings and other events held in Havana. The women described the place occupied by those in charge of those tasks and named the women they had established a close relationship with.

During the course of our research, we were able to establish that the recognition of those who carried out care work took place while talking about private experiences highly valued by the women. It was an affectionate, warm recognition that, nevertheless, made it difficult to identify those who did this type of work in “colder” spaces like the Table, or those who were close to the women who did not participate in the interviews. However, the detailed stories of most of the 16 interviewees emphasize the importance of those in charge of different types of care tasks.

Regarding the differentiated experience of care, the women acknowledged that some Cuban men carried out this type work, but most of them mentioned women. We lack enough information to determine whether men took on care responsibilities in the Colombian delegations, but it is clear that said responsibility fell on the women, both those in Cuba as members of the delegations and those who supported their participation during the years of the process.

The following are the grounds for these conclusions: first, although the women did not mention it directly, the comparison between those who had young children at the time of the peace process and those who did not, makes it possible to conclude that motherhood posed more difficulties and challenges for participation in the process. Secondly as shown above, some women took on the role of caregivers vis-à-vis their companions and the peace process. These additional roles that entailed accompanying others personally and emotionally were observed to be naturalized, even in those spaces where the debate over how to implement the gender perspective was going on. Third, the multi-functional role of women, as opposed to men, put them at a disadvantage in terms of self-care and highlighted gender inequality.

Care practices were recognized as fundamental for materializing peace. The women identified their importance, thus making care visible as a political scenario that made it possible to reach common goals. Additionally, care practices provide new ways of relating to others, even those in the opposition, and therefore foster the creativity necessary to transform conflicts, as was the case in the Subcommittee on Gender. Caring for someone belonging to the other side of the negotiation was also interpreted as affection, and this reinforced the bonds among women, regardless of their position, while easing tense environments and making it possible to address issues and reconcile differences. This lived experience breaks down social imaginaries regarding the joint work of women, where the idea prevails that women cannot work together and that the spaces in which they are present are fraught with conflict.

The experiences lived by the women in spaces where mutual care practices took place fostered mediation on difficult issues and made possible other forms of interaction and rapprochement. Given that it is not possible to negotiate a peace process without conflict transformation and with negotiators who lack the strategies

and tools to cope with the emotional exhaustion caused by the negotiations, care is a fundamental pillar in peace processes.

Among the care practices essential for the negotiation process carried out by women the following are worth highlighting: the psychosocial accompaniment needed by those negotiating a conflict in order to deal with the emotional burden of the negotiations and the separation from their primary support networks; the implementation of creative strategies to help unblock the negotiations; and the construction of temporary care and support networks aimed at ensuring the emotional wellbeing of the participants in the peace process. It is important to emphasize that these abilities are not “innate” or “natural” characteristics of women, but rather tasks that have been assigned to them socially and culturally, and which should become abilities shared by every single person in a country engaged in peacebuilding.

The issues discussed in this chapter show that care should be recognized as a fundamental contribution to a peace process. They also point out the need to give care its rightful place in public scenarios and political processes such as the Negotiating Table in Havana.

5. THE PROCESS IN TERMS OF WOMEN'S EXPECTATIONS, EXPERIENCES, AND MEANINGS

This chapter addresses the subjective dimension of women's participation in the peace process in Havana. In political processes, reason comes into play as do emotions, experiences, and perceptions. Taken together, these aspects fundamentally affect how people engage and participate in such processes, their relationship with others, and the contents of individual and collective political interests. Thus, they directly—and often invisibly—impact the decisions routinely made in political processes.

Participating in a political process inevitably occurs within the framework of people's life history. Hence, for our purposes, an important part of how this process unfolded was based on the following factors:

- The women's prior personal, political, and work-related experiences, which positioned them in their respective delegations from the beginning of their participation.
- The perceptions built up over the course of one's life vis-à-vis the "others" as enemies or, at the very least, as the opposition; these perceptions permeated the dynamics of interpersonal relationships and daily life in Havana, with the concomitant trust and uncertainty they entailed.
- The personal and collective convictions regarding the need to transform the country's internal war, which allowed the parties to reach a final agreement despite multiple (process-related and personal) crises during the process.

Our research project examined this subjective dimension in terms of four aspects:

- The first, focused on women's expectations with respect to the peace process itself, their place in the process, and their own

participation prior to arrival and even before learning that they would go to Havana to take direct part in the negotiations.

- The second stems from experiences. A process with the characteristics and magnitude of this peace process—as pertains to time, place, participants, agenda items, and myriad events—was fraught with a variety of experiences that women lived in different ways, and these experiences marked each moment of their participation and their individual views of the process.
- The third aspect relates to lessons learned. The participating women identified what they consider lessons learned from this process—from personal, work-related, political, and collective perspectives.
- Finally, the fourth and final aspect addresses meaning. The women involved in the peace process lived it intensely. Regardless of the delegation to which they belonged, the activity carried out, the extent of participation in Havana, or the moment in which participation took place, the process was meaningful for all women. Therefore, having formed part of this process has not gone unnoticed in each woman's life experience.

5.1 Expectations

Upon confirmation — between August and September 2012 — of the signature of the “General Agreement for the Termination of the Conflict and the Construction of a Stable and Lasting Peace” between the FARC-EP and the Colombian Government, which launched the public phase of the peace process, the individual and collective expectations of diverse sectors and stakeholders of Colombian society quickly took shape.

The beginning of the process was characterized by a broad array of positions. On the one hand, there was a high level of skepticism among a certain segment of society, attributable to the failure of earlier negotiation attempts between the two parties, and opposition to the talks due to the terrorist status given to the FARC-EP in recent years, which justified an armed rather than a political solution to the conflict. On the other hand, there was support from social organizations, human rights defenders, and victims who hoped that someday a different country would be possible.

Within the framework of these positions and expectations regarding the process, the women protagonists, some of which became directly involved in the initial public phase while others joined the process later, had their own expectations about the future and the outcomes of the process, which were colored by personal experiences and political positions shared with the groups and sectors they belonged to.

The distrust between the parties, formed over decades of armed confrontation, was evinced by the scarce expectations that the women — both the members of the FARC-EP and those of the National Government delegation — had regarding the possibility of reaching a final agreement. The FARC-EP women thought the process would fail shortly after the work of the Negotiating Table began and they did not hold high hopes for the advancement of the agenda being negotiated. They chose not to get their hopes up, for they did not trust the National Government to act transparently given how previous attempts to end the conflict by means of dialogue played out, as well as the military persecution of the FARC-EP during the eight years of the previous administration.

We've tried many times [we thought], so we didn't get our hopes up because it could happen that the process would fail, because it's not the first time that we've been here, we know how it is. (Interview 5)

Nobody thought that the process could last; we all thought that we'd only be here for two or three months. (Interview 6)

In the Government delegation, those who were closest to the initial exploratory process and the establishment of the Negotiating Table shared a similar distrust, which mitigated their expectations regarding the advancement and success of the process:

...after the exploratory phase, there was a lot of doubt about the FARC's desire for peace. (Interview 16)

The mutual distrust and expectation that the peace process would fail were the primary background against which the women formulated their expectations about themselves in this process. Interestingly, in contrast to their low expectation regarding successful negotiations, women's personal expectations led them to do their best to advance the process.

Thus, the participating women's main expectations were centered on learning and contributing. Aware of the fact that they were not experts on all topics broached — and that no one at the Negotiating Table was — and of the need to handle the different scenarios entailed by their participation, these women knew from the outset that there was much to learn, that the lessons learned would be part of their contribution to the process, and that this learning would be beneficial for both their teams and the individual women themselves. Although the women from both delegations shared these perceptions, they were more salient among the women of the FARC-EP. The possibilities of learning in order to contribute were reinforced by the interventions, at key moments, of experts on the different topics — from both civil society and international cooperation agencies.

The request or instruction received by these women to join their respective delegations necessarily entailed that they support some scenario, activity, or topic in the peace process. This sparked their expectations of “doing the job well,” being assertive in their contributions and the relationships they established with others, and “not letting down” those who had chosen or appointed them. Even when they were not sure of the specific responsibility they would be assigned, the desire to contribute was present:

I was very excited because I said: I'm going to be able to contribute here. Your state of mind is always to contribute.
(Interview 6)

In some cases, the desire to contribute to the peace process came about during the development of activities in Bogotá, prior to direct participation in Havana.

I thought: I hope I'm on the advisory panel of people going to Cuba, so I can contribute to their work. (Interview 1)

In the case of the women who were not present from the beginning in Havana, expectations regarding their participation had distinct phases. At first, they expected to join the working groups in Bogotá and offer support to those who traveled to Havana for different activities. Then, they aspired to directly contribute in Havana, to at least attend one of the meetings related to their work topics. Finally, once in Havana, expectations of direct involvement over a longer period increased.

However, it is interesting to point out that many of the women interviewed during our research had not imagined, when the peace process began, that they would have a role, so they did not form personal expectations regarding any role in the process. In spite of finding themselves linked to topics related to the negotiation agenda or carrying out activities considered essential for the development of the process, their involvement was a surprise to many:

I never thought I'd have a role; that was a surprise. I still can't even believe it. (Interview 11)

In some cases, this reaction of surprise or disbelief stemmed from the fact that some participants did not hold a high leadership position or ultimate decision-making role in their group or work space, though many did work at levels and institutions that had — or that were expected to have at some point — a direct relation with the Negotiating Table in Havana.

Well, the first time, I went with one of the groups of victims, and I wasn't expecting it because I thought that only bosses went [...]; for me, it was very... very rewarding, and it took me a little by surprise. (Interview 4)

In other cases — especially among members of the Government delegation — the surprise at being appointed stemmed from the fact that the women were working on topics related to women's and LGBTI persons' rights in the civil society sector rather than on issues focusing on armed conflict and peace. Therefore, they considered the possibility of contributing from civil society and not as part of the National Government delegation.

No, I didn't have any idea; I was doing something completely different. I was in another civil society organization, doing different things; I mean, I'd never worked on things related to armed groups... nothing. I was working on topics related to the rights of women and the LGBTI population. That was what I was doing. It was never on my radar as a job possibility. (Interview 13)

For others already linked to the State, their appointment was unexpected because they worked in areas that, in principle, were far removed from the topics of peace or the termination of the armed conflict by political means.

I was in the defense sector, thinking about war, in how to wage it effectively [...] then there was a shift in the future of this work; war became a non-viable option. (Interview 16)

By comparison, for interviewees from the FARC-EP peace delegation, the expectation of properly transmitting the voice of the FARC women in the camps was identified in varying degrees. Those who were part of the process in Havana from the beginning, as well as those who arrived after the establishment of the Subcommittee on Gender, felt that one of their most significant responsibilities was representing their female comrades — their interests and their lived experience — as guerrillas.

[In the camp,] we were always up to speed on everything they said, the interviews they gave, everything that was going on. Kind of always thinking: Wow! How difficult that must be, how hard, we admire them a lot [...] then when you're here, you feel the same. Every time I'm about to say something, I stop and think: What are the women in the camp thinking? [...] they see themselves represented in us, and we have to do it right; so, it's a pretty big responsibility we have. (Interview 5)

This type of expectation, understood as a collective responsibility on behalf of the FARC-EP women, was not initially observed among the Government delegation women. Nonetheless, within the framework of the Subcommittee on Gender, they gradually began to develop a similar sense of collective responsibility vis-à-vis Colombian women. Given that the Subcommittee became the concrete possibility of having women's needs, mainly those of female victims, included in the negotiation agenda, the participating women came to see themselves, in different ways, as representatives of Colombian women writ large and responsible for conveying the voice of women's organizations.

5.2 Highly significant moments and situations

As the peace process advanced and the women gradually became directly involved in Cuba, the expectations they had upon arrival were transformed, day by day, and led to the development of new perspectives. Thus—as shown in previous chapters—their initial concerns and difficulties changed, and women's participation secured important achievements. Yet, behind the most visible achievements, there are hundreds of emotions, efforts, and sacrifices that, although invisible, form a fundamental part of the story of this process and its results. We would like to highlight them here.

During our research, we identified six situations and moments as those most memorable for the women given the high emotional load and personal impact with which they were experienced: (a) the arrival in Havana; (b) everyday life; (c) the relationship with people from the other groups and delegations; (d) the crises stemming from the failure to advance on certain issues; (e) the result of the plebiscite held on October 2, 2016; and (f) the reunions with family members. It is also important to highlight the fact that, in the most difficult moments, the women's response was to continue working in favor of the peace process.

Arrival in Havana and everyday life (a and b). The peace process brought with it massive transformations in the lives of the participating women. Thus, their lived experiences of the previous years, the arrival in Havana, and the everyday life there that revolved around the Negotiating Table are touchstones in the interviewees' lives.

In the case of the FARC women, the arrival in Havana meant a complete change in their everyday lives and "their world"; they all lived it differently but agreed that the adaptation process was difficult. By the time that they arrived in Havana, some had spent years without setting foot in a city, knew nothing about the latest information technologies, and had remained anonymous until then.

It meant facing a totally different world, where you'd never thought you'd ever be. Coping with this situation, learning to interact with people, with journalists. It's hard, after twenty or thirty years in the mountains; today, society is different, and everything is so fast paced; there are so many things that are totally different. (Interview 8)

When I finally landed, I realized I was actually here... It had been a long time since I had been in a city, the noises, cars, etc., what a bed was, what a room was: it was all a process of adapting. (Interview 7)

The move to Havana also entailed distance from those with whom they had shared different experiences—comrades, friends, partners—and the uncertainty of not knowing how long they would be in Havana or if they would see these people again.

It was really hard for me, really tough, first because—as I was saying—I had a relationship with a partner for many years [...] so that, for me, on the one hand, personally, was really tough. On the other, the change: changing so abruptly, feeling so far

away, so isolated, thinking that I couldn't live up to my duty.
(Interview 9)

In the case of the women members of National Government peace delegation, though in different aspects, participation in Havana also changed their everyday lives and the rhythm of their personal, family, and work-related activities. The negotiation cycles were always intense, and, as the peace process advanced, they became increasingly demanding: the trips to Havana were more frequent and drawn out.

When their participation in the peace process began, several women in the delegation had young children (infants, two-, four-, and six-year-olds). This meant reorganizing caretaking activities in Bogota with the help of family and friends and adapting to seeing their children and the rest of their family infrequently during some negotiation periods. Hence, these women's colleagues became the people with whom they spent most of their time, and, given that the sleeping and living quarters in Havana also functioned as the workplace, the boundaries between the workday and personal time were blurred

The personal cost for us was brutal, though it wasn't as bad for me because my baby was still very young, so I brought him with me, which also changed my involvement because I didn't go to any of the social functions. This was a strange dynamic because people ate breakfast, lunch, and dinner together. Lunches, meetings, outings, they did it all together. (Interview 14)

...the negotiating cycles were intense; there were cycles of three days of work and one day of rest. And you live with the people you work with; work is right there. At one point, we even did group yoga. (Interview 16)

Facing changes in the rhythm of daily life and even personal sacrifices during their participation in and contribution to the peace process was also a reality for the women from international cooperation agencies and guarantor countries, who served as permanent companions and advisers on certain topics. They experienced it in different ways, depending on how long their participation lasted.

It's about one's commitment, I mean, I jumped in headlong, and, for me, it's been very intense, personally and professionally; I've dedicated a lot of time to this, and I've sacrificed a lot [...] a lot of travel, and a lot of personal issues as well, but you also choose

how involved you get. I decided that it was worth it, that it was a commitment that we had to take on [...] so I decided to go ahead! (Interview 4)

My family supported me a lot throughout this work, but they've also felt that I've had to travel a lot; unforeseen things came up, and I've occasionally had to travel without so much as a full day's notice. My family is happier now that I'm not traveling as much. My family has supported me, but they've also been bitter because of all my traveling. (Interview 10)

Relationships with people from the other delegation (c). This situation was lived in a deeply emotional way, so relationships became a central theme touched on by all interviewees. Their feelings ranged from fear and skepticism to surprise and recognition.

This was very impactful [...] I had this idea like of fear, the fear that you grow up with associated with the guerrillas. Then, you go and see them, and they are flesh-and-blood people, like anyone else, so you get this shock, like "Wow! I'm standing in front of the guerrillas"... something weird, but not only because you're looking at them but also because you're going to sit down with them at the same table to talk. It was something good, yet also strange. (Interview 13)

Participating in the same spaces as people from the opposition was uncomfortable for most of them at the beginning of the process; the women recall not really knowing how to talk to the others or how to act.

I remember the first day at the Negotiating Table: they were there and we were here; no one knew what to do or how to begin. (Interview 6)

Two concurrent experiences in the first few months were the routine carrying out of activities different activities different from those they had before arriving in Havana and learning about topics not necessarily in their specific area of expertise in order to be able to discuss them with people with whom they felt an enormous distance, a distance attributable to distrust.

Most interviewees recognized that interactions among them became easier over time. Their daily work —particularly that of the Subcommittee on Gender —allowed most of the participants to gradually build solidarity and trust, regardless of what delegation or

group they belonged to, though differences between their positions remained.

It was harder for me [to relate to the women from the other delegation], but it got better over time [...]. At the beginning, there was hesitation, but it kind of goes away later. For example, at first [this one woman] seemed awful to me, she seemed so bossy... but I came to see that that she was doing her job and that [the women from the other delegation] were pretty cool overall. (Interview 6)

Although not all the women participants had considered what it would be like to meet their counterparts at the Negotiating Table upon arriving in Havana, they all held a position regarding “the other men and women”, built on the basis of multiple and diverse reasons. These were grounded in the stereotypes historically generated by each part in the process, the direct work with victims of the armed conflict (through which they had met victims of the opposition), family history, political positions, and other experiences. Overall, for the members of both delegations in Havana, their historical enemy was suddenly embodied in flesh-and-blood men and women.

At first, we had so many preconceived notions of the women from the Government because there was mutual distrust... Of course, because they saw us as the enemy [...]. It was hard. We also had preconceived notions, but we understood that they were not the bourgeoisie, those in power: they were employees, women doing a job. (Interview 8)

Of the women who reflected on what it would mean to engage in dialogue with people from the opposition before their first trip to Havana, some decided to prepare themselves for the moment and control their personal bias so that it would not interfere with their work in favor of peace for the country.

The first thing was this feeling that I had to go into the process with humility, that this was very important, sensitive, for Colombia, and that you had to rid yourself of personal interests that could cloud the goal. When they told me that I'd be going to Havana, I felt that I needed something spiritual to be magnanimous, generous, open-minded, to be willing to listen to others, to be willing to wait in line for the bathroom with the guerrilla women, to see those I have considered criminals my entire life, see them as partners in the building of a national project. I could not go in with anger, hate, or a desire for

revenge; so, the first thing that I felt was a need to prepare myself spiritually. (Interview 3)

However, the day-to-day aspect of the work over the course of four years not only changed the mutual distrust and fear, but also opened the door—for the women—to new ways of seeing the members of the opposition and made mutual recognition possible. This transformation of viewpoints, particularly those held by the women from the Government delegation vis-à-vis the FARC-EP, was completely unexpected at the beginning of the process.

...I was surprised. I think that we're part of a generation in which the premise that the FARC was born out of some ideals but that, once drug trafficking entered the picture, it lost [those ideals]. And I really understood and faced a guerrilla group that, of course, has committed all the crimes it's committed, and has trafficked all the drugs it's trafficked, but that clearly has its ideals. I don't share them, but I do believe that they are convinced of what they believe. (Interview 12)

I was really surprised by the discipline, rigor, strategy, political ability, perseverance, and preparation. There were no improvisers; they were always prepared their interventions very well; there was a lot of preparation, rigor, discipline in everything they did. (Interview 14)

Stalemate of discussions on some topics (d). The moments of distress and despair, along with high levels of uncertainty and physical exhaustion, were also part of the experiences faced by women each day over the course of four years for most, though it was 5 years for some:

...I had many moments of weakness, even wanting to get out ... I mean, I didn't want to go back anymore... But out of exhaustion, kind of like... Darn! We push and push, but we aren't getting anywhere! (Interview 1)

During the interviews, the women recalled the feeling of powerlessness and despair induced by the stalemate on some topics at the Negotiating Table. Months, even years, went by in discussion of a topic or agenda item without any agreement between the parties; occasionally, it even felt as if the setbacks outstripped the advances, as if the discussion would take one step forward and two steps back.

...on a personal level, there've been hard times too, right? Of despair, of crying, of seeing that things aren't working out,

that progress isn't being made on an item, that the [person] whom you thought was speaking your same language no longer seems to, going back to it, trying, explaining again. So, it's been complicated at times. (Interview 4)

At some points, the women sank into uncertainty, not only because of the situation at the Negotiating Table, but also because of what was happening in Colombia while they were in Havana. Specific events related to military actions by one side or the other during the negotiations, which caught some by surprise, were cause for some distressing moments. However, as the women themselves noted, these were the consequences of negotiating in the midst of an armed conflict.

Because there were moments when you said: Is this going to work? Is this going anywhere? Is it all worth it? Because, of course, we were here [in Havana] and then all that going on in the country and things happened, like when they killed all the soldiers in Cauca; so, you wonder: Am I wrong? Is this the right thing to do? (Interview 1)

The result of the plebiscite (e). One of the most challenging moments during the peace process—as signaled by the interviewees—was October 2, 2016 because of the result of that day's plebiscite on the agreement between the Government and the FARC. The result produced strong reactions and emotions among the women: "It was a blow that we did not see coming or perhaps one we didn't want to see coming." The result brought with it notable discouragement and sadness. For many of the women, it was inconceivable that the majority of voters did not opt for a peaceful end to the armed conflict.

October 2 was really hard for me. I mean, it was completely unexpected and totally paralyzing. (Interview 4)

Especially for those who participated in the Subcommittee on Gender, the idea that the so-called "gender ideology" led more people to vote "No" in the plebiscite was quite frustrating. The women said that the negative and deceptive use of the issue they and the women from civil society organizations had worked on for two years was very painful.

It was really sad, wasn't it? And really infuriating, it really angered us. It would've been one thing if, say, it'd been an honest critique and if it'd been a transparent debate showing that the whole country was definitely not interested in changing the

situation of women. But it was a misrepresentation of what was done, manipulated, dirty; it was quite underhanded and vulgar. (Interview 5)

However, despite the emotional impact of the moments of anxiety, distress, despair, and uncertainty, and despite the exhaustion brought on by the pace of the process and the many sacrifices, all interviewees found—in personal or collective terms or with respect to the implications for the peace process itself—reasons to carry on and reach the finish line. Consciously or not, they all identified ways to overcome adversity.

For the women from the FARC-EP, their commitment to the organization and their trust in the leadership of their comrades assured them that this peace process would strengthen them organizationally and would allow the FARC-EP to contribute to the country, now without weapons, in pursuit of a more just society in line with their political principle. This encouraged them to continue contributing the best of themselves and believing in the process

But you also say: okay, I'm going to learn something different, I'm going to live an experience that may contribute to peace, that may contribute to the FARC, and your enthusiasm returns. (Interview 9)

On the other hand, the women from the National Government delegation found reasons to continue moving forward, such as the hope for peace—which grew with time and concrete progress on the agreements—, individual awareness of what the process could mean for the country, and the certainty that opportunities such as this one rarely come up.

It was really intense; there were so many sacrifices in terms of personal time because it's demanding. It's very hard to reconcile this when you know everything that's at stake; you're aware of how important it all is, so you've got to help it move forward, whatever that means for your time. So, it's very costly but very rewarding. (Interview 12)

For the women from international cooperation agencies and guarantor countries who were interviewed, overcoming obstacles as well as tense or discouraging moments during the process was made possible by their very immersion in it, its importance in the national and international context, and what it represented for them as women. All their prior work in Latin America and in other peace

processes had prepared these women to participate in Colombia's peace process. In fact, this was viewed as a unique privilege by the women, one that could not ignore, which explains their unwavering commitment.

Facing the daily obstacles of the process led women from the different delegations to "test themselves," allowing them to discover new strengths, enhance their skills in interaction, communication, negotiation, coexistence, problem-solving, etc., and recognize their capacities and abilities:

The experience is tense and hard, and you come out of it empowered, seeing all that you are capable of. (Interview 14)

Reunions with family members (f). The last key moment highlighted as part of the significant experiences is reuniting with family members in the case of some women from the FARC-EP. While this aspect is not directly related to the Negotiating Table, its existence made these reunions possible. Some interviewees had not seen or contacted their families for years and the public visibility of the process allowed women's families to contact and subsequently visit them in Havana.

In some cases, that first reunion entailed questions and reproach by families with respect to the women's decision to join the ranks of the guerrilla or not informing their family of the decision. In turn, the women found out—during these reunions—about the threats lived by their families as a result of the women's affiliation with the FARC-EP. Some met new members of their families whom they had not met, or about whom they did not even know.

Regardless of the content and form of these reunions, they represented very important experiences for the women in Havana, more so because they marked a fresh start for family relations. Today, the interviewees remain in constant contact with their families; they have had the opportunity to catch up on what some called "overdue conversations" and receive their families' support in their effort to lay down their arms and build peace from within civil society.

The six moments and/or situations touched on here are only a sample of the multiple unexpected and emotionally intense experiences lived by the women in Havana as they carried out their roles within their delegations and the Negotiating Table and which affected—to a greater or lesser extent—the content and form of their participation.

5.3 Lessons learned and reflections

A process of the political magnitude of a successful national peace negotiation leaves multiple reflections and lessons learned at the personal, professional, and collective levels. Most interviewees agreed that the process was “quite edifying.”

On the personal level, women underscored that participation led to increased openness to listen to others with whom they have differences as well as a broader understanding of diverse, even antagonistic, positions:

Learning to listen, which I think is one of the qualities that we must have [...], more than learning to speak, we need to learn to listen. (Interview 5)

Moreover, interacting in high-pressure spaces with people they never would have imagined allowed some women who considered themselves shy, very reserved, or averse to relationships in general to become more willing to engage in dialogue and interaction with people they scarcely know or strangers:

I have learned to be slightly more open to interacting with other people. (Interview 9)

Contextually speaking, the process made it possible for many women to expand their own knowledge of the country’s reality, to delve into situations that they had not previously known about or situations of which they did not have a “complete picture”:

I learned more about the actual state of what’s going in the country, of everything that the armed conflict caused. (Interview 16)

The discussions at the Negotiating Table brought into dialogue different and often opposed viewpoints regarding land, how victims were affected, and, ultimately, the country itself. These discussions served as important input for achieving a more comprehensive and less divided vision of the armed conflict and its consequences.

...I think that part of the experience of the process is a little like being patient, breathing deeply, looking at things from a broader perspective, like when you can’t see the forest because you’re looking at the trees; I learned, then, to take this broader perspective. (Interview 12)

At the professional level and/or that of the strengthening of activities and occupations, the lessons learned were varied. Some women strengthened their concrete skills to conduct the work they were appointed for:

I think that one of the lessons learned that I'll take with me from here is that... I became more professional in my editing and camera work. (Interview 9)

Others learned new abilities and skills in fields they had never worked in during the process—that is, they “learned by doing.” Looking at the future, they consider these skills highly useful: for example, programming web pages, managing multimedia content, making public presentations, writing different types of documents: technical documents, executive summaries, minutes, press releases, etc.

For women whose work topic was peace and conflict resolution before participating in Havana, this experience offered them new reflections on the concrete implications of a negotiation seeking to end armed conflict. For example, on the basis of the peace process, many of these women can currently identify best practices for a negotiating table, as well as practices and decisions that, from their perspective, could jeopardize the advances made at a negotiating table.

A general lesson that's stuck with me is that it's highly risky to submit a peace process to a referendum. The agreements, in this case, are very progressive; when implemented, they're going to led to a more just and egalitarian country, but perhaps they were too progressive for society at large... I'm not sure if this is a lesson learned... also, more reporting on the contents of the agreements should always be done, that is a lesson learned. (Interview 10)

In particular, the Subcommittee on Gender stands out as a space that positively contributed to the women who comprised it. Their participation there was lived differently from the way they experienced other spaces:

[The Subcommittee on Gender] is a really sincere space, indeed, a truly open space. Of course, it was built over time, not immediately, but that's how it was lived... (Interview 1)

Moreover, The Subcommittee's work generated multiple reflections and different levels of lessons learned among the women.

It's been a learning process [...]. I also learned that the absence of women at the Negotiating Table is not offset by the fact that there are many of us contributing behind the scenes; it's a problem of visibility. There are different ways to participate, but more women as full-fledged members of the delegations were needed from the beginning of the process. (Interview 16)

Some women had previously worked on topics related to women's rights and peace, for whom this peace process offered an opportunity to reflect on previous processes, identify methods for mobilizing women's participation from a comparative perspective, and reaffirm—in accordance with the UN Security Council's resolutions on women, peace, and security—that women's participation makes a difference in peacebuilding processes.

Something that we have been studying for a long time in peace processes around the world is that participation definitely creates ties, bonds, threads that weave a different possibility for overcoming conflict, and that was one of the experiences here that led me to serious reflection. [...]. Also, [we've been studying] women's power, the direct power that they have to influence a process like this one. (Interview 15)

The Subcommittee on Gender also steered women to new political perspectives, occasionally in completely unexpected ways. Analyzing the situation of women in each negotiating point of the agenda, talking with women who were victims of various forms of violence, and collecting and examining the proposals for each point on how to include women's needs and interests broadened their knowledge of Colombian women's reality, as well as of the major obstacles to having their rights guaranteed. This new knowledge led to the commitment of many of them to work in behalf of women from their different spaces, beyond the peace process.

This process has given me, as a major tool, a greater understanding of women's struggles and not only in sentimental terms but also in terms of what these struggles entail... and doing it with great passion. This process has led me to absolutely commit to women's struggles, to the point that I've identified myself and I define myself as a feminist, a FARC feminist, which is strange, but it's who I am. (Interview 7)

All these lessons learned and reflections derived from women's involvement in the peace process allowed them to strengthen their participation in the same, day after day, and allowed their reflections to transcend the scope of the process and serve as life-oriented reflections, lessons learned that will improve their participation in other spaces.

5.4 Meanings of participation in the peace process

Regardless of their role, delegation, or involvement period or duration, all of the interviewees clearly identified the meaning, in their personal lives, of having participated in the peace process between the Colombian Government and the FARC-EP. The meanings attached to this process can be described in personal, work-related, and future-oriented terms.

In the first place, most women pointed out that this process is the most important thing that they have done in their personal, political, and professional life. They lived it intensely; it challenged them as women, professionals, and guerrillas. It transformed their daily lives for several years and even transformed them as people. Above all, the results of this process could radically change the country's trajectory. For these reasons and others, the women endowed the process with high doses of meaning.

...I think it's been the greatest experience of my life; I think it's been the most important task that I've carried out within the organization. Not because the other tasks have been less constructive or less valuable but because this is an enormous responsibility. (Interview 5)

It is certainly the most important thing that I've done in my life. Without a doubt, it's the most important thing that I could have ever done in the professional field because I can't think of anything else that I could do in my work field that would be more important. I've thought about this a lot... What else could you do in a job to make you so fulfilled? (Interview 16)

In the second place, the peace process acquired meaning for each woman as it advanced and with the agreements achieved on the different agenda items: possible futures for the country, other than armed conflict, took shape in each woman's perspective. Whatever the form of this viewpoint, all interviewees imagined one.

Living this process, well, man, it means dreaming of building something beautiful, of people no longer dying out of need, because of basic necessities, it's dreaming of reuniting families, it's dreaming that people no longer die outside hospital doors, of having ways to study, in ways that we didn't have. In other words, all this means that you're motivated to engage in this process. (Interview 9)

I'm very proud of this, even if it doesn't move forward; it was all worth it because it means imagining that Colombia can be different. We won insofar as we unlocked the country's humanity. I think that it's been worth it; one thing is the country we have; another is the country we want to have. (Interview 3)

All the meanings flowing from expectations, experiences, and lessons learned also lead to the satisfaction of "having fulfilled one's duty," the awareness that what was done is of profound importance for the country, beyond the personal costs and sacrifices. Hence, the women feel privileged and proud of their participation in Havana, of their direct contribution to peacebuilding.

...not a week went by that I didn't feel: it's unbelievable to be able to take part in this. Even during the hardest times, with a heavy workload, of having to work a lot, there was a tremendous feeling of being part of something that I was privileged, honored, to be a part of. It truly is big, and I enjoyed it as much as I could; despite the really hard times, I told myself, "This is historic, being part of this discussion, no matter what ends up happening." (Interview 12)

Yesterday, when I was at the signing [of the "Final Agreement"] and when Timochenko and President Santos shook hands, I thought, in retrospect, of the enormity of the effort it took to get to this point, and one of the reflections that came to mind is that for me it is a key opportunity. In my life, it's been very important to have been part of this process because it means witnessing that the impossible is possible. The first time I went to Havana, you could've cut the tension at the Negotiating Table with a knife. (Interview 15)

Thirdly, having participated in this process has been so important in the professional and personal lives of some interviewees from the National Government delegation that they estimate that its effects will reverberate in their futures. The meaning and results of their participation are not only appreciated in terms of the past and present but also in terms of the future. It was an opportunity when

they started participating, and they believe the end of the process will bring further opportunities.

So, I do recognize that it was not only something beautiful in my life but also a real opportunity, a springboard for advancement. I do believe that, professionally, it makes a huge difference with respect to other people who have a profile similar to mine but who haven't worked specifically on this; I think that it makes a difference in professional terms. (Interview 13)

For the FARC-EP women, the process and their participation also represent new future perspectives and it is an essential element of the meaning these women attached to the process. Their lives underwent changes upon arriving in Havana, though their futures promise many more Interviewees from this delegation were emphatic in stating that what they lived over the four years peace of the process strengthened them in individual and collective terms, and it is a fundamental aspect in the role that they have decided to hold in the political future of the FARC-EP and the country.

When our lives are more peaceful, we'll be able to function better. We FARC women are very calm with respect to what's coming, and, above all, we have many expectations that it's going to be a very, very important moment for us [...]. We want to be there [in the FARC-EP political party]; that's why we're going to study, build on the experience we have, to strengthen the political party. (Interview 5)

The intensity and content of the meaning of the peace process and the form in which this meaning was shaped over time varies from woman to woman. Nonetheless, for all interviewees, the process marked a before and an after in their lives and allows them to project and channel different futures.

Conclusions

Given the expectations, experiences, and lessons learned, this process was highly meaningful for all the women talked to during this research: it challenged them, transformed them, and made them proud. Contributing to a peace process that may change the country's history imbued their daily lives with meaning in Havana and made all their sacrifices worth it.

The subjective dimension of women's participation in the peace process in Havana revealed scarcely visible aspects of women's daily

experiences throughout their participation. The expectations, fears, surprises, moments of weakness and sadness, changes, and sacrifices all marked the way in which each one assumed the process day by day and their relationship with the counterparty.

The doubts regarding the future likelihood and success that prevailed in several sectors of society during the first few months of the peace process was also present in the women participants, as evinced by their initial expectations. Yet, the perseverance with which they decided, despite this doubt, to give the best of themselves to move the process forward is salient.

In spite of the profiles of the women participating in the peace process and the experience they had already acquired in different fields of work related to the negotiation agenda, it is telling that the majority of interviewees did not expect to be summoned to participate in the peace process in Havana, or at least not from the beginning. That is, the place in which they set themselves within the process in its initial phases was not one of direct and decision-making participation, for such places were seen as the domain of men even by these women themselves, and not necessarily consciously. This reveals how issues such as the “glass ceiling” are normalized by men and women in society, regardless of the situations in which they find themselves.

With respect to especially meaningful moments, it is interesting to observe that despite the differences among the women, deriving from what delegation they belonged to, the roles they carried out, and their personal characteristics, the accounts given in the interviews revolved around the same situations and moments, although they were lived differently. The emotional dimension, expressed as happiness, fear, despair, uncertainty, etc., was a determining factor in the meaning and recollection that women have of these moments. All the emotions lived by the women form an important part of their personal history and that of the process, insofar as they inevitably played a role in shaping these women’s participation and decisions.

Similarly, the multiple lessons learned and reflections made by the women during the peace process are united by a common thread: they were all forged as part of the most meaningful experiences. The challenges they faced led them to develop different types of abilities and skills, expand their view of the context, change their understanding of “the other men and women,” and, in some cases,

adopt new political viewpoints. All these lessons learned made them stronger and will surely impact their participation in the future personal, work-related, and political contexts.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This research project allowed for the documentation of women's participation in the peace process in Havana between the Colombian Government headed by Juan Manuel Santos and the guerrilla of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP) guerrilla group, on the basis of women's narrations of their own experiences.

Interviews with delegates from the Government, FARC-EP, and international cooperation agencies as well as guarantor countries, revealed details regarding what participating in the different levels of the peace process entailed for women. The material we used for our analysis does not aim to offer an exhaustive account of the peace process in general. On the one hand, in an interview (regardless of its length), it is impossible to address the immensely complex web of events and interactions that took place during the years of talks that resulted in the "Final Agreement for the Termination of the Conflict and the Construction of a Stable and Lasting Peace"; on the other, it does not address the participation of all women, but rather focuses on the women who participated in the process in Cuba as part of the aforementioned delegations.

Nevertheless, these women's stories clearly convey the obstacles, victories, and challenges faced during their participation in the peace process and as part of the different work committees, the way in which the process changed them, and their remaining concerns.

These conclusions are organized around three aspects: first, the obstacles, victories, and challenges; second, transformation during the peace process; and third, concerns and reflections remaining after the peace process.

6.1 Obstacles, victories, and challenges

According to the interview structure, the women began by discussing the specific details of their participation in the process,

from arrival to the Negotiating Table and the work committees to technical aspects of how the role they played contributed to the negotiation. The descriptions of the work done flowed from reflections on different aspects of participation in the peace process. Thus, the women viewed their experience within a complex setting in which they faced obstacles, achieved victories, and responded to challenges as women who contribute to peace building.

Some of the difficulties surrounding this experience are framed within the different circumstances that hindered the peace process, such as the difficulties in negotiating between the parties, political tensions, and the pressure to reach an agreement in the allotted time out of fear of what a delay would mean for peace. The common denominators in how these women faced such obstacles are creativity and perseverance based on their prior professional, political, and organizational knowledge and experience.

Generally speaking, the women had a common perspective: in trying times of the negotiation, their objective was, rather than giving up, to find different ways to approach the problem or the concomitant arguments, in order to overcome the obstacle. Whether by means of new arguments, new ways to frame them, emphasis on the human and emotional aspect, or review of other situations to identify alternatives, the goal of achieving agreement and being creative to overcome obstacles were of paramount importance to this process. Thus, the difficulties became opportunities to construct and consolidate new political strategies.

Other issues faced by women were linked to the circumstances of their participation in the process, such as the fulfillment of multiple responsibilities coupled with the scarcity of time; the separation from their families or close support networks for long periods; the challenge of constantly having to convey excellence to keep the place they had earned in such an important historic process as peacebuilding; the issues stemming from the characteristics of the spaces, which they deemed “very masculine”; the invisibility of their leadership roles; the marginal position of the Subcommittee on Gender; and the additional work-related responsibilities besides those entailed by involvement at the Negotiating Table.

These difficulties made the women more emotional, leading them to express anguish, exhaustion, or frustration. Occasionally, when explaining how they experienced these obstacles, women’s answers

were full of silences that possibly speak to emotions that still have not been processed or that have not found the right moment to appear. At any rate, these emotions interplay with the satisfaction of having participated in a successful peace process, which represents one of the most valuable experiences in these women's lives.

Finally, there were obstacles associated with the women's different political interests during their participation: difficulties agreeing at the beginning of the Subcommittee on Gender meetings, the need to persuade colleagues about the gender perspective, individual interests, and the interests of the organization or institution that they represented in the discussions of each item.

The descriptions of these obstacles reveal the broad array of women participants' political positions and strategies employed to form alliances and resolve differences. They all describe these moments with a depth and emotion that reflects the importance of their political interests in the peace talks. Furthermore, they recognize the value of the other women, of their interests, and show how they distanced themselves from or engaged with these interests. This provides an account of women's political diversity and of how they created joint strategies to engage with one another and strategies to convince others to position gender perspective in the process.

The victories identified by women are linked to their political interests in the peace process; when they broached them, they emphasized each woman's effort and work toward achieving these interests. The victories mentioned are of two types: those won through the Subcommittee on Gender as victories of all of them, and those achieved through the different subcommittees in which they participated. There are, however, shared victories:

- First, the strong sense of satisfaction at having positively taken the peace process to the signature of the "Agreement" and the excitement they felt about fulfilling their proposed objectives. For all the women, participation was worth it.
- Second, the inclusion of the gender perspective in the agreements and procuring—in good measure—the support of the other members of the Negotiating Table in this regard. This interest (mainly at the end of the process) is a general victory recognized in the interviewees' narratives.

- Third, the professional and personal recognition they earned within their respective delegations as a result of their efforts and contributions; this fact, for most of the women, warrants special attention. This is tied to the last point: the women appreciate what this experience represented for their professional and political lives after the process. They all expect to play a role in the implementation of the agreements and a central role in peacebuilding, whether as new political actors or as part of the technical team in charge of implementing the agreements.
- Fourth, the positioning of the Subcommittee on Gender as an innovative space in negotiating tables, especially the fact that this Subcommittee garnered international recognition and is viewed as an example to follow.

The challenges identified by the interviewees can be divided into two categories: personal and professional/political. The moment when the interviews were conducted —specifically, during the transition from negotiation to implementation of the agreements—impacted the interviewees’ expectations regarding what would happen after the process. Therefore, the women, displaying a general optimism, wondered how they would adapt to the new circumstances.

The challenges that they perceived with respect to implementing the peace process are associated with the polarized atmosphere arising from the results of the plebiscite on October 2, 2016. Nonetheless, the women’s confidence in the work carried out and the solidity of the agreements, the knowledge of their work, and their political commitment to transforming the country instilled in them a sense of optimism and motivated them to tackle the challenges. For some of these women, when interviewed, the most difficult part was behind them; for others, the greatest challenge lay ahead, namely implementing the agreements, especially with respect to gender mainstreaming.

On a personal level, the challenges are associated with how to engage in the process and how to mesh their role in peacebuilding with daily life. For the women from the Government, the challenge consists of returning with a higher political profile and reorganizing personal life once permanently back into Bogotá. For the FARC-EP women, a complete transformation is involved, since reintegrating into civilian life and shifting to political activity by dint of words represent a life change for them. As pertains to the women from international

cooperation agencies and guarantor countries, the challenge lies in how to stay involved in the peace process from their new locations and how to promote the implementation of the agreements with a gender perspective.

Generally speaking, all the women view this phase optimistically because they are confident that they have the personal tools to face the new challenges. The women from the guerrilla delegation emphasize, moreover, the lessons that they acquired during the process and the transformation taking place within the FARC-EP, which granted them a leading role as actors in the new political scenario.

Cleanly separating the obstacles, victories, and challenges is hard, for, as seen in the preceding chapters, obstacles and difficulties have made way for—in the opinion of many of the women—victories and opportunities during the peace process. That is, when encountering obstacles in the political positioning of their interests, the women developed new strategies for action and influence that allowed them to strengthen their participation.

Nonetheless, it is important to highlight that the aforementioned achievements meant that women had to make extra efforts in terms of time, energy, and care practices for which no one else took responsibility; in other words, these achievements were the product of perseverance and a desire to exhaust all possible tools before failure. These efforts are linked to “women’s multifunctional capacity,” which some considered an obstacle, while others evaluated it positively although it can be considered an obstacle for some, was positively evaluated by others in terms of what such extra effort brought them.

This demonstrates women’s enormous willingness and willpower throughout the process despite exhaustion and occasional despair. Paradoxically, managing to position the gender perspective, in an attempt to rectify discrimination against women and demand the transformation of traditional gender roles, the women themselves had to take on roles traditionally viewed as feminine—for example, care practices.

6.2 Transformations during the peace process

The peace process was a scenario of change for its participants, and interviewees described it as such. According to their accounts,

those who were involved throughout the negotiation process were transformed in some way. For them, the lessons learned and changed perspectives and attitudes can be divided into several categories: political lessons learned related to the role and the multiple strategies that can be employed in their political action as women; specific lessons learned from the Subcommittee on Gender; and lessons learned gleaned from the peace process itself, such as not seeing the opposition as a stereotype and working on conflict-resolution strategies.

With respect to women's transformation in terms of understanding participation and political action, the women identified some actions and attitudes as facilitating the achievement of their objectives. These personal actions and attitudes, then, became strategies that made it possible to exercise influence on the process:

- First, work and discipline allowed them to advance the Subcommittee on Gender, as well as their political interests proposed during the peace process.
- Second, women formed alliances to persuade other members of their respective delegations to incorporate the gender perspective into the different subcommittees of the negotiation process. They also explored non-confrontational forms of participation; creativity, perseverance, search for solutions, and coordination among them made it possible to incorporate this issue into the agreements.
- Third and last, care practices and the relationships cultivated in a cordial and close manner, imbued with "feelings," helped them strengthen bonds, thus facilitating their influencing capacity in different participation spaces.

The Subcommittee on Gender and the study of gender perspective created conditions that led many women to reflect on and undergo transformation in their personal and political lives. For many interviewees, feminist studies and positions on gender mainstreaming were either new or positions they were not very familiar with. Furthermore, they recognize that the women's movement fostered this perspective and that the documentation and training and support provided by external advisors (Colombian and international) and women from international cooperation agencies, especially UN Women, Norway, and Cuba, helped them learn about many of the aspects included in the "Final Agreement".

This learning catalyzed their reflection on the importance of women's equal participation in political processes, the patriarchal practices of which they have been part, and the importance of their work as women within a political organization. The FARC-EP women began an internal transformation focused on building a *FARC feminism*, fostered by and in sync with the creation of a commission on gender in the organization. For the Government women, reflections and lessons learned depended on the women's prior knowledge and appropriation of the gender perspective. These women recognize the importance of making women's participation visible in political processes and they value the different "feminine" practices that were instrumental in solving problems during the peace process.

Peace processes, if successful, can be expected to give rise to processes of transformation, and the interviewees relayed some of the lessons learned through their experiences. One of the transformations that they identified was the perception and recognition of members of the other delegation. All interviewees assert that their perception of members of the Government, in the case of guerrilla delegates, or of members of the FARC-EP, in the case of the Government delegates, changed in some way during the negotiations.

This change is associated with the humanization of the opponent achieved by a peace process, and the women mention that as time passed, everyday conversations became easier, which brought them closer to others; likewise, this coming together facilitated the negotiation process and the achievement of agreements.

Another lesson learned associated with peace processes has to do with negotiating strategies, among which the women underscored creativity, non-confrontational forms of conflict resolution, and perseverance as aspects that helped overcome obstacles and allowed them to conceive alternative paths of action.

6.3 Concerns and reflections after the peace process

Given that the majority of the interviews were conducted at the end of the negotiation process that culminated in the first agreement, these women's reflections center on their evaluation of the process and the ideas that arose at that specific juncture rather than during negotiations. These considerations were also enriched by the renegotiation after the plebiscite, during which time some interviews took place.

The accounts of this final moment not only refer to how events unfolded but also to how they were viewed once the peace process finished. In this respect, the interviews allowed the women to share their experiences, learn from them, identify some aspects that have changed, and highlight aspects that they would have liked to see happen differently. The interviews also reveal how their expectations changed, the role of care work in the process, and what aspects could have been changed to enhance their participation and recognition. Such reflections encourage consideration of what a successful peace process entails from the viewpoint of women.

All aspects recognized and analyzed are framed by this specific moment. The interview excerpts selected for this book do not convey the small changes in the narratives of some women. This shows that the conversations with the researchers contributed to consolidating the women's perspectives. This research process invited the women to organize and make sense of the complex experience of having participated in the peace process, as well as to clarify what it meant for them. Some ideas reinforced across the interviews are the following: the need for women to have been full-fledged members of the delegations with greater visibility; the obstacles to recognizing women's work, and, in general, the efforts of those who performed care work; the importance of care work during the peace process; and the frustration stemming from the fact that, after putting in so much work, not everyone always had the chance to "appear in the photo."

One of the topics most clearly signaled by this *a posteriori* reflection is the complex emotions, temporary frustrations, and motivations elicited by participation in the process, all of which, in the end, are demonstrated in the pride that the interviewees feel as a result of having contributed to peace, the satisfaction of having made their best effort, and their assessment that their sacrifices had been worth it.

In addition, there are clear achievements in the agreements that these women regard as their own and that fuel their satisfaction: the inclusion of the gender perspective, the importance of women's voices in peacebuilding, and the differential treatment of minors are unmistakable achievements of their positions, efforts, and creativity during negotiations. Likewise, these women enjoy the total satisfaction of having contributed to a peace agreement that includes women and their needs and of having made visible female

participation in building an inclusive peace agreement that marks a step forward in the recent history of women's participation in peacebuilding, both in Colombia and the international scene.

Lastly, this reflection clearly indicates the implications of women's participation in the peace process and the "Final Agreement." Without these women, the agreement, which is a source of pride in a wealth of different sectors in Colombia, which has garnered international praise for its inclusive perspective, would be incomplete because it would have left out issues central to peace building: victims would have been excluded from the new political scene as would have the rights of boys and girls and the interests of former female combatants. Therefore, the remaining challenge is to materialize women's influence on the negotiating process in the implementation of the agreements achieved.

7. THE WOMEN WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE PEACE PROCESS DELEGATIONS

In what follows, we list the names of the women who participated in the peace process as members of the delegations that were the focus of our research. Those women mentioned here are the ones we were able to identify during the research process, either because they were interviewed or because they had exercised their right to petition before State institutions. During the process of gathering information, we resorted to every possible mechanism to obtain the complete list of the women.

However, as pointed out in previous sections, it was not possible to obtain the names of those women who carried out care work in Cuba. Nor was it possible to verify whether the totality of the women members of the National Government, FARC-EP, international cooperation agencies, and guarantor countries delegations appear on this list. Any omission has been the result of the difficulties we faced when trying to obtain a consolidated and complete list of those women members of the delegations, who contributed to the peace process from their different roles and activities. Therefore, our objective of making them all visible has yet to be concluded, and our recognition extends to all of those women who might not appear on these lists.

The names of the women have been organized alphabetically, by delegation.

Women members of the FARC-EP delegation

1	Alexandra Nariño	21	Nasly Guevara
2	Antonia Simón Nariño	22	Nathalie Mistral
3	Camila Cienfuegos	23	Olga Arenas
4	Carmenza Castillo	24	Olga Marín
5	Diana Grajales	25	Paola Franco
6	Elisa Gutiérrez	26	Paola Sánchez
7	Erika Montero	27	Patricia González
8	Gina Alape	28	Samy Flórez
9	Isabela Sanroque	29	Sandra Ramírez
10	Julieth Rojas	30	Sarah Luna Nariño
11	Laura Villa	31	Shirley Méndez
12	Manuela Marín	32	Sonia González
13	Marcela González	33	Victoria Sandino
14	Maritza Sánchez	34	Viviana Hernández
15	Maryelly Ortiz	35	Wendy Arango
16	Mayerlly Ospina	36	Yadira Suárez
17	Mery Rodríguez	37	Yamileth Rivera
18	Milena Reyes	38	Yira Castro
19	Mireya Andrade	39	Yuri Sara
20	Nancy Chávez	40	Yvonne Rivera

Women members of the Colombian Government delegation

1	Alejandra Sofía Olmos Molares	13	Aura Milena Peralta González
2	Alicia Alfaro	14	Beatriz Helena Gallego Guzmán
3	Ana Leonor Alfonso Rodríguez	15	Blanca Lilia Muñoz Gaona
4	Ana María Fernández	16	Caral Rayaraies
5	Ana María González	17	Carol Vanessa Barajas Ramírez
6	Ana Milena González Giraldo	18	Carolina Varela
7	Andrea Jordán	19	Catalina Díaz
8	Andrea Lancho	20	Catalina Toro Silva
9	Andree Viana Garcés	21	Claudia Lorena Cortes Arias
10	Ángela M. Caicedo Mogrovejo	22	Daniela Quinche Pachón
11	Ángela Medra	23	Dayana Cely Calvete
12	Ángela Paola Medina Jiménez	24	Diana Andrea Camacho Correa

25	Elena Ambrosi Turbay	51	María Inés Restrepo Cañón
26	Elsa Margarita Galera Gelvez	52	María Lucia Méndez Lacorazza
27	Iris Marín Ortiz	53	María Mónica Herrera Irurita
28	Isabel Restrepo Jiménez	54	María Paulina Riveros Dueñas
29	Isabelita Mercado Pineda	55	María Prada Ramírez
30	Jenny Carolina González Camacho	56	Mariana Otoy Casafranco
31	Jessica Stella Cáceres Rojas	57	Martha Ligia Reyes Rodríguez
32	Johana Cárdenas Beltrán	58	Martha Maya Calle
33	Johana Paola Forero Acosta	59	Mónica Cifuentes Osorio
34	Juana Inés Acosta	60	Mónica Sánchez Chaux
35	Juanita Goebertus Estrada	61	Myriam Edith Sánchez Acosta
36	Juanita Millán (Teniente de Navío)	62	Myriam Fernanda Méndez Montalvo
37	Johana Rojas Roa	63	Natalia Arboleda
38	Juliana Andrea Ramírez Muñoz	64	Nigeria Rentería Lozano
39	Laura Patricia Clavijo Mantilla	65	Norma Constanza García Merchán
40	Leyla Patricia Moscoso Martínez	66	Oriana Julieth Alonso Vinasco
41	Liliana Mercedes Bohórquez Sánchez	67	Paola Molano Ayala
42	Lina Ibáñez Valero	68	Paula Gaviria Betancur
43	Lina María García Daza	69	Paula Gutiérrez Yepes
44	Lorena Arévalo Chavez	70	Pilar Andrea Peña Vargas
45	Lucía Jaramillo Ayerbe	71	Sandra Villamizar (Teniente)
46	Lucía Victoria Gonzales Duque	72	Silvia Delgado Maldonado
47	María Ángela Holguín Cuéllar	73	Sonia Marcela Durán Field
48	María del Pilar Acosta Rojas	74	Vanessa Loreley Molina Gómez
49	María del Pilar Barbosa	75	Zohanny Arboleda Mutis
50	María Emma Wills Obregón		

Women members of the Norway delegation (guarantor country)

1	Anne Heidi Kvalsoren	10	Kirsti Andersen
2	Anne Jevne	11	Kjersti Rodsmoen
3	Ashild Falch	12	Kristin Bergtora Sandvik
4	Betzy Martín Ramírez	13	Luisa Fernanda Reyes
5	Catalina Rodríguez Pérez	14	Mona Frøystad
6	Elisabeth Slattum	15	Rita Furuseth Sandberg
7	Hanne Henriksen	16	Turid Arnegaard
8	Hilde Salvesen	17	Vilde Rosen
9	Idun Tvedt	18	Yngvild Berggrav

Women members of the Cuba delegation (guarantor country)

1	Aurora García
2	Magalys Arocha Domínguez
3	Zulan Popa Danel

Women belonging to international cooperation agencies (UN)

1	Belén Sanz Luque	5	Marcela Briceño
2	Diana Espinosa	6	Margarita Muñoz
3	Esther Ruiz Entrena	7	Sandra Ruíz
4	Katie Kerr	8	Silvia Arias

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1	Mireia Cano
2	Judy Caldas Mera
3	Pilar Rueda

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